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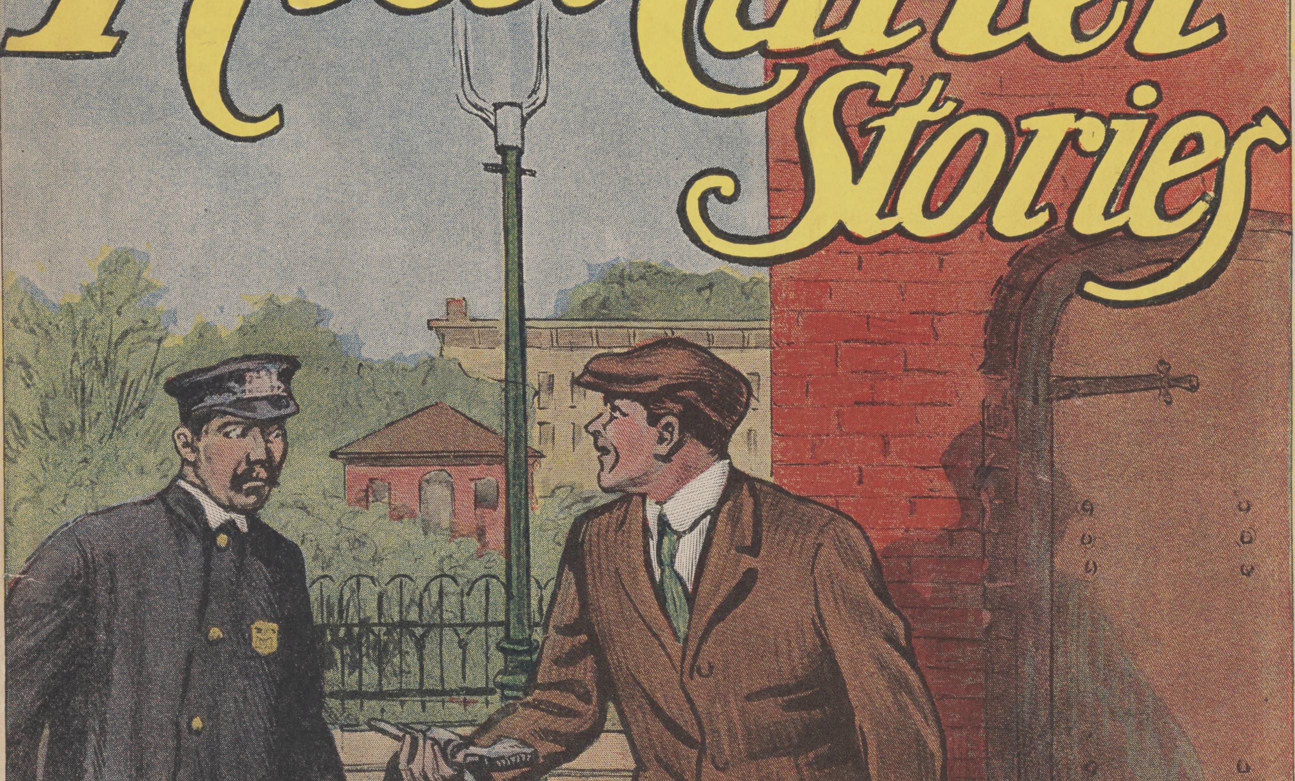
Nick Carter Stories



THE OPIUM-RUNNERS

or - Nick Carter's Enemies from the Orient

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NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE OPIUM RUNNERS;

Or, NICK CARTER'S ENEMIES FROM THE ORIENT

Old 5c Novels, Books and Magazines
Bought, Sold and Exchanged.
WM. HAND
MIDDLETOWN, PENNA.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

AN EXCEPTIONALLY CLEVER PLOT.

ll, you haven't told us yet, chief, what was in that of correspondence and other stuff that you man- save when Chadwick was about to consign it to mes."

speaker was Chick Carter, Nick Carter's senior as- and adopted son. The question was an important hich had been agitating the young detective's mind me days, and about which Nick had thus far seen keep dark.

had recently been called in by Collector of Customs all, of New York, to help the government out in icularly aggravating case of long-continued smug-

suspected persons were a certain William Ashton on, who conducted a high-class art-and-curio busi- n Fifth Avenue, and his beautiful wife, formerly ce Benedict, a comic-opera star of a few years be- The customs inspectors, however, even after re- attempts extending over more than a year, had unable to prove anything against the pair.

great detective's coöperation had been asked on ry day that Simpson was expected back from abroad e of his periodical trips. Carter and his assistants een on hand at the dock, had witnessed the meet- etween the suspect and his wife, and had brought it something like a hundred thousand dollars' worth ms in Mrs. Simpson's mouth and hair, after the arly fervent kiss and embrace, in which the two ublicly indulged.

Simpsons were released under heavy bail, after t dealer had threatened Nick with some mysterious ge. A few days later the detective had been seized by a gang composed largely of members of a certain militia company. He was rescued by his assistants, who managed to capture most of the gang.

Later still he had been attacked by others of this same National Guard company during their annual summer encampment, and, with Chick and Patsy, had fought a desperate night battle, which had finally resulted in the wounding and capture of several more guardsmen—including the first lieutenant of the company—and the flight of the captain himself.

This captain, "Billy" Chadwick, was a young man of aristocratic connections and a great social favorite, who had also made an enviable record for himself as an unusually efficient officer. He was unsound at the core, however, and was shown to be a silent partner of Simpson's in the latter's smuggling operations. He had also taken advantage of his position in the guard to recruit a squad of reckless and unscrupulous men as part of his company, thus making himself unusually dangerous.

Nick had broken up this unique "crime squad" very effectually, and had finally experienced the satisfaction of seeing the captain go "up the river" to prison. Simpson and his wife, on the other hand, still remained out on bail, and had been using all sorts of influence to delay their trial.

On the night of Chadwick's capture, Nick had succeeded in preventing the captain from destroying a lot of papers, which he was just about to burn. Some time had elapsed since then, and the detective had made use of the papers with good effect more than once, but he had never shown them to his assistants. They had been certain, though, from his manner, that he expected to make his find bear more fruit sooner or later. It was to these papers that Chick had referred.

The famous criminal investigator smiled one of his slow, characteristic smiles before he replied.

"You already know some of the tips I found in the junk, don't you?" he asked.

"You mean about Rabinovitch, Goodman, and the rest of those dealers in precious stones, who had been disposing of Simpson's smuggled gems for him?"

"Yes. It was Chadwick's papers that put me on the track of them, and enabled me to send them where they belonged."

"Oh, I guessed that much long ago—no thanks to you!" declared Chick. "But you know perfectly well, chief, that you have something else brewing, as a result of that same information. You can't fool us. Don't you think it's about time to let us in on the secret?"

"You and Patsy here?" queried Nick, nodding his head toward the second of his two favorite assistants, who was also in the room.

"That's the idea."

"Perhaps it is," Nick agreed. "We have been fairly busy with other matters lately, and, as the rest of the clews in Chadwick's papers seem to be more or less obscure, I haven't gotten around to doing anything of importance in regard to them. Now, however, I think I see my way clear to giving them some more attention, and I shall certainly need you two to help me out."

"That sounds more like it," remarked Patsy Garvan. "Gee, I'm curious to know what you have under the table, chief! I thought you had already made about as thorough a clean-up as possible. The Simpsons can't help being convicted when their trial comes off. Chadwick, Titus, his first lieutenant, and the rest of the Company F mob won't give us any more trouble for one while; and you've landed a number of the Jews and others who were handling Simpson's undeclared 'imports.' I don't see that there's much left to be done."

Nick's face had become more than usually grave.

"On the contrary, what is before us is more important than all the rest," he answered quietly.

"How the dickens can that be?" demanded Chick. "More important than diamond smuggling?"

"Exactly."

"You'll have to show us," observed Patsy.

"That won't be difficult. Ever heard of Persian-gum opium?"

"Sure," Chick returned promptly. "It's not very highly considered as a drug—is it?—but, if I'm not mistaken, it commands a good, stiff price for smoking. From a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars a pound, I believe."

"That's the situation in a nutshell," said Nick. "At that price, can't you imagine that smuggling Persian-gum opium on a big scale might easily be more important—and even much more profitable—than even diamond smuggling?"

"Great guns! I guess that's right!" ejaculated Patsy. "You can't flood the market with diamonds and rubies and pearls without having a good many embarrassing questions asked, and you run up against all sorts of snags in trying to dispose of them. It's mighty slow work any way you can fix it, too. With opium, though—well, it may be a drug, but it surely isn't a 'drug on the market.'"

Nick smiled a little at his assistant's attempt at a joke.

"You put it quite accurately, Patsy," he remarked. "If a man knows how to smuggle opium into the country he can almost always find a market for an unlimited quantity of it at a price that would be an irresistible temptation to every rascal out of jail. The trouble has always been that the customs inspectors were a little too sharp for the usual run of smugglers. The latter might ply their lucrative trade for a time, bringing the stuff in in comparatively small quantities, but sooner or later they were almost sure to be caught. Chadwick's papers, however, make clear that he was mixed up in an exceptionally clever and thoroughly worked-out plot to do the business on an extended scale. In fact, I have never heard of a scheme that promised such profits along that line. Simpson and Chadwick expected to split no less than a million and a half a year between them. They even had some idea that they could make it an even million apiece."

Chick whistled expressively.

"The deuce you say!" he exclaimed.

"Expecting and doing are horses of a different color," Patsy put in wisely.

"True," admitted Nick. "But I'm not so sure that they couldn't have done it. As I say, they had the thing down fine, and the customhouse people would have sweated blood before they could have discovered the game, even if they had suspected what was going on—which isn't very likely."

"But what's the excitement now?" Patsy wanted to know. "Their little game is already as good as knocked on the head, isn't it? Chadwick is doing time at this minute, and Simpson is next door to it. When he gets his—as he ought to before long—the opium smuggling will die a natural death, won't it, even if they've begun it before this?"

"Don't you believe it! Do you imagine I would be wasting my time and yours talking it over if that were the case? The point is that they have not only begun to bring the stuff in by the wholesale—if Billy Chadwick's papers mean anything—but that they have also arranged matters so that the traffic will go on automatically without them. That's what interests me most about the affair, and what makes me say that the biggest part of our job still remains to be rounded off. I'll tell you just what I have learned, though, and then you can judge for yourselves."

CHAPTER II.

THE SMUGGLERS' AGREEMENT.

The detective unlocked one of his desk drawers and took out a thick bundle of papers held together with a big rubber band.

"Here's the stuff that Chadwick was just going to put a match to when I interrupted the proceedings," he explained. "I don't wonder he delayed his get-away long enough to try to destroy these letters and the rest, for they are more than ordinarily incriminating. He was a fool to have kept them at all, but, of course, they were not in his regular rooms. They were in the dingy Ninth Street flat he had taken under an assumed name, and which he did not expect ever to be searched. It wouldn't have been, either, if he hadn't kindly led me to it. For one thing, these valuable documents obtain plenty of evidence that may come in very handy at Simpson's trial, and that of his charming wife. I'm looking forward to springing some of them then, if necessary. Their hints as to this amazing opium plot, however, are the ones we're concerned with just now. Those hints occur in several places and in different forms. There is one letter from Simpson to Chadwick which refers to the plan, and the first rough draft of a letter from Chadwick to Simpson. The chief source of information, though, is a remarkable agreement, or memorandum, for the working arrangement whereby the scheme was to be—and evidently is being—carried out. Here it is."

Nick detached from the bundle several sheets held together with a chip, and unfolded them. His assistants waited expectantly, their interest having been whetted to a sharp edge.

"I shall read only the more important parts of it at present," the detective went on thoughtfully. "Let's see. This sounds rather interesting—don't you think?"

"'The following agreement, made and entered into this day by the undersigned, shall be in force immediately prior to and following the sailing of the German Imperial line steamer *Crown Princess Marie* from Bremen on March 31, 1914——'"

"That's about four months ago," put in Chick.

"Just about," replied his chief. "You can see, therefore, that the traffic must have been going on for some time, and that the profits must already be large. But, to continue:

"'It is hereby understood that the agents of the undersigned in Persia, hereafter to be designated, shall make all arrangements for the purchase of the gum opium in that country and its transportation to Bremen, in accordance with the memorandum of instructions attached. The amount of Persian-gum opium thus secured and shipped to Bremen shall not fall short of eight hundred pounds per month, unless said instructions be superseded by others at any time.

"'When the opium reaches Bremen, our agent there, Otto ——, is to turn it over to the stevedores employed by him, who will carry it on board the vessels of the aforesaid German Imperial line concealed in life preservers belonging to the regular equipment of the various vessels respectively, such life preservers to be furnished by the stewards and others employed, or to be employed, by us on board each of the vessels to be designated from time to time. Once on board, these life preservers with their contents are to be placed either in the steward's quarters, in the cabin of a passenger known to be traveling in the interests of the undersigned, or in some other place on board, to be specified from time to time by our Bremen agent. Said life preservers are not to be hidden in any case, but are to be substituted for others, and placed in the customary positions after all evidence that they have been tampered with shall have been removed. They are always, so far as possible, however, to be placed where they can be under the watchful eyes of our accredited representatives on the vessels.

"'Upon the arrival of the various steamers in the Hudson River at Nikobo, New Jersey, the opium is to be removed from the life preservers—see detailed instructions herewith—and turned over to a longshoreman or other person sent by our Nikobo agent, Oscar ——, who will carry it to Oscar's place in Nikobo. There it is to be repacked in bags of rice, or otherwise, according to the said Oscar's instructions, and subsequently removed at safe and convenient intervals, to Chinatown, Manhattan, where it shall be delivered to our Chinese associate, Li ——. The said Li will know what to do with it after that.'"

When Nick Carter had got that far he paused and looked up significantly at his two assistants.

Patsy made a characteristic face.

"Nothing like being businesslike, even if you are a rogue!" he commented admiringly. "They certainly seem to have known what they were doing, but I wish they had been a little more specific in regard to the names of their various agents. It was rather inconsiderate of them to leave us so much in the dark in that respect."

"How much do you want?" demanded Chick. "We have the first names, and if we cannot find out the rest we had better go out of business."

"Oh, it sounds easy enough," conceded Patsy, "but is it, after all?" Nikobo is an annex to the Fatherland, and if there is one 'Oscar' there, there must be a thousand. And the same thing is true of the 'Lis' in Chinatown. There are more of them than you can shake a stick at."

"That is true enough," declared Nick, "but I am inclined to agree with Chick. I am not going to quarrel with Simpson and Chadwick about all this surprisingly definite information which they have given us, just because they have chosen not to drop the whole story into our waiting mouths. These first names narrow the scope of our inquiry very materially, and the rest seems to be a mere matter of digging out."

"I should think the easiest way would be to set a watch over Simpson," suggested Patsy. "He is out on bail, and free to do as he chooses. Isn't it likely, therefore, that he may be holding occasional conferences somewhere, either with this Chinaman, or the mysterious Oscar in Nikobo? They seem to be the important ones at this end of the line, aside from Chadwick and Simpson."

Nick shook his head in dissent.

"I hardly think we had better go at it from Simpson's angle," he said. "It looks to me as if it would be safer and better, even if more tedious, to scour Hoboken and Chinatown for the men named or half named. You must remember that Chadwick has probably found some means of informing his accomplice, Simpson, of the loss of these papers. As a result, Simpson is doubtless on the alert, and waiting some such move on our part. That would make it difficult to shadow him, and it is partly because of that phase of the situation that I thus far refrained from telling Collector Marshall about my find. He may not like it when he learns that I have withheld the information so long, but, considering the circumstances under which I secured it, I felt free to use my own discretion. It seemed to me that it would be best to delay matters for a while, in the hope that Simpson would be lulled into fancied security, and made to believe that nothing was being done. For all I know, of course, he may have promptly issued instructions, after Chadwick's capture, that all opium-smuggling operations should cease for the time being. I hope that he has not done so, but, at the same time, I realize that he would be a fool not to take that action."

"Even if he did do so, that doesn't prove that the traffic has ceased," Chick pointed out.

"How do you mean?" asked Patsy.

"Why, simply that these other people may have taken occasion to go contrary to his instructions, as the chief has pointed out. This whole thing is worked out so thoroughly, that it could easily go on indefinitely without the active participation of either Simpson or Chadwick. They furnished the brains in the beginning, and expected to appropriate the bulk of the profits, but now one of them is in prison, and the other cannot manage to stay out very much longer. That being so, isn't it more than possible that their agents may have chosen to carry on the smuggling alone, and divide up the proceeds among them? They may have felt that their principals were practically eliminated from the situation, and that they thus were unexpectedly in a position to grow rich at the government's expense, without having much to fear from Simpson and Chadwick."

"That is quite possible," admitted Nick. "The unusually profitable nature of the enterprise may have tempted them in that way, even though Simpson had warned them to go slow for a time. They would have been taking great chances, though, for, if they tried any such tricks as that it would be quite conceivable that Simpson would betray the whole thing to the customs authorities, in revenge for the treachery. He would have little or nothing to lose by such an act, since he is already facing a prison term."

"I suppose you are right about that," Chick agreed, and in either case, whether Simpson has warned his agents and stopped the smuggling, or whether they have wanted to continue it, and have not dared, for fear of what he may do, it looks as if the only thing for us, was to turn this information over to Marshall, and let him be on the lookout for any possible resumption of operations later on. Somehow, though, I cannot help feeling that the thing is still going on. It is almost too tempting for such men to resist, even though they are in imminent danger of being caught at the game."

"Let's hope you are right about that," Patsy put in. "I would ask nothing better than a chance to have a crack at some more opium smugglers. I have not the slightest sympathy with any one who is engaged in that wretched business, no matter how, and judging from these plans, this particular plot is the biggest and most dangerous that has ever been hatched. Think of it—at least eight hundred pounds of opium a month! What is even an occasional murder in cold blood, compared to an enterprise that means murdering the minds and souls of men and women, as well as their bodies, ultimately, by means of unlimited quantities of that vile stuff. It gives a fellow the creeps when he thinks of it, and if I could only get my hands on this Dutchman, or the chink——"

The young detective did not finish his sentence, but his meaning was sufficiently clear, and made still more so by the look of righteous indignation in his eyes, and the suggestive way in which his hands clenched and opened, and clenched again.

CHAPTER III.

CHICK HITS UPON A CLEW.

"We are with you there," Chick said, with emphasis. "The question is, is this thing still going on, or is it stopped temporarily, or permanently? In any case, what are we going to do about it? What are your plans, chief?"

"I was coming to that in a moment," replied the detective. "There is something else here that brings it up naturally."

"You mean one of the letters you spoke about?" queried Patsy.

"Yes, a note from Simpson to Chadwick, of comparatively recent date. I will find it in a minute. Ah, here it is. I need not read it all to you. The point is, that it refers to the crossing from Bremen to New York, of a certain Eunice, on the German Imperial liner, *Crown Princess Wilhelmina,* on her present trip this way."

"The deuce you say!" ejaculated Patsy. "When is she due?"

"The day after to-morrow."

"That sounds like a clew, if they have not suspended operations. Of course, you have no idea who this 'Eunice' is?"

"As it happens, I have," Carter returned. "I may be mistaken, but since this note originated with Simpson, it looks as if I were not far wrong. I do not know whether you boys know it or not, but Mrs. Simpson has a sister, Eunice Benedict, who has followed in the footsteps of the fair Beatrice, and is now a show girl in a musical comedy."

"I think I have seen her picture," said Chick. "Never thought of her in connection with Mrs. Simpson, though."

"Well, it would be wise to do so, I imagine," Nick observed meaningly. "We already know that Mrs. Simpson has been having a big part in her husband's smuggling ventures, and it does not require a very considerable stretch of imagination to assume that she has drawn her sister into the game, which seems to appeal so strongly to many stage favorites."

"Have you tried to find out whether Eunice Benedict is really on board the *Crown Princess Wilhelmina,* on this trip?" asked Chick.

"Yes, I have made inquiry at the local offices of the steamship company, and the New York agent has sent a confidential cable to Bremen, at my request. The name does not appear on the passenger list, but a young woman of Miss Benedict's description is on the vessel."

"By George! That sounds as if there might be something doing," murmured Patsy. "If the smuggling game had been discontinued, there would not have been any reason for her to give a different name, would there?"

"It would seem not," returned Nick, "but one cannot always tell what an actress, or a would-be actress, is going to do. The Benedict girl may simply be amusing herself by traveling under an assumed name, or she may be working up some press-agent stunt. However, in view of this feature, it looks as if there might be something more to it. At any rate, it will not mean much delay, and this note gives us something definite to go on. Anyhow, it names a particular vessel, and a specific trip. We could do some quiet little work in advance of the vessel's arrival, but I think it would be well not to go into the matter too deeply until then."

"What is the program for that occasion?" asked Chick.

"Well, I have an idea that I shall go down the harbor and board the ship at quarantine. I know several of the men who are on the passenger list, and I could supply myself with a good excuse for meeting one of them. That will enable me to keep an eye on the situation, as the vessel nears port. I shall have to go in disguise, I suppose, but that presents no difficulties. As for you two, the dock may prove an interesting place for you, either when the landing is made, or afterward—probably the latter."

"You mean if there is anything doing it will probably come after the passengers have landed?"

"Almost certainly. You can watch the disembarking from the dock, and I will keep my eyes open for any suspicious behavior on the part of the passengers or stewards. We will work entirely independent of the customs inspectors. As a matter of fact, however, I don't look for any activity until after docking. That will be the natural time for the opium to be removed from the vessel, and we shall all be on hand in the hope that some longshoreman will kindly guide us to this Oscar, whoever he is. If our luck holds that far we ought to be able to follow the trail of the stuff to Chinatown, and locate the distributing center. When we have done so it will be time to strike. Not before."

"Good! That sounds all right, and let's hope we won't have our labor for our pains," remarked Chick. "What can we do in the meantime, though?"

"I should say that you boys cannot do better than to try to locate as many 'Oscars' and 'Lis' as possible. After all, nothing may happen when the *Crown Princess Wilhelmina* docks, and if that turns out to be the case, it would save time if we had done some of the work beforehand, for we shall then have nothing but the first names to aid us."

Patsy already had a coin in his hand, and now he tossed it up.

"All right," he said, "heads for first choice—Chinatown or Nikobo. If you asked me there isn't much choice, but——"

"Heads!" called Chick.

"Heads it is."

"Then give me Chinatown. I find it considerably more interesting than Nikobo, with all due deference to your opinion, Patsy."

Thus it was that Chick, at the first opportunity, began taking a census of the various Celestials in New York's Chinatown, who bore the name of "Li," while Patsy devoted himself to similar researches in the much-maligned city, just across the North River.

It was late the following afternoon before either had anything definite to report, and then it was Chick who brought the big news. His manner as he entered his chief's study told that he believed he had learned something of importance.

"Well, which of the numerous relatives of the great Li Yung Chang have you unearthed?" asked the detective, with a smile.

"I don't know about that," was the reply, "but I found an 'Oscar' from Nikobo, paying a visit to a 'Li' in Chinatown, which seems to be about as good evidence as one can ask."

Nick looked surprised.

"I won't dispute that," he commented. "Do you really mean to say——"

"I certainly do. More than that, the 'Li' in question happens to be Li Yung, one of the wealthiest merchants in Chinatown, as you doubtless know."

"Li Yung? Of course, I know him—or of him, at least. He has all kinds of money, and all kinds of influence. He poses as one of the most conservative and law-abiding of his race. I never would have suspected him in such a connection, but you can look for almost anything from an Oriental. All I can say, is if Li Yung is at the bottom of this, I fear we shall have both hands full. We might almost as well fight half of Chinatown as to tackle him, and it may end in that, anyway, for he doubtless has one of the two great tong organizations behind him. Go on, though. How about the 'Oscar?'"

"He's going to prove a hard nut to crack, too, I'm afraid. I shadowed him back to Nikobo, and found out that he is Oscar Schroeder, who owns the Waterside House, a hotel close to the docks. It's not much of a hotel, but Schroeder is reputed to have plenty of money, and to be very powerful politically over there."

"I haven't the honor of the gentleman's acquaintance," remarked Nick. "Ever heard of him, Patsy?"

"Not I. I know where the Waterside House is, though. It's a big, rambling, wooden building. One of Nikobo's relics of other days, and sailors seem to like the bar, judging by the patronage they give it. I don't believe the place has any too good a reputation."

"Probably not," assented Nick. "Well, Chick, your information suggests that they may still be doing business, otherwise Schroeder would not have been likely to be over here in Chinatown. Perhaps they were making arrangements for the steamer's arrival to-morrow. All of our arrangements are made, as it happens, but it might be worth while to keep an eye on the hotel and on Li Yung's place to-night. Chick, you can take the latter, and Patsy can cover the Nikobo assignment again. Try to get a line on the people connected with both places, and on the habits of the two proprietors. Anything you can pick up may come in handy to-morrow night, or later. Don't do anything that will get you into trouble, however, or arouse any fears on the parts of the men suspected. In other words, 'play safe.'"

"Safe it shall be," promised Chick, and Patsy concurred.

"There is one other thing we shall have to keep in mind," went on the detective: "it may well be that these fellows mean to set a trap for us. It seems as if they must know that Chadwick's papers have fallen into my hands, and that we may be expected to interest ourselves in the doings of this opium-smuggling syndicate. If, for any reason, Simpson hasn't passed the word on to them, we have nothing more to fear than we would ordinarily have in tackling such a gang. If, on the other hand, they know what to expect, it would be entirely in keeping with Li Yung's Oriental cunning to try to lead us on, until he was ready to spring some surprise on us. Therefore, we must keep our wits about us, and our eyes wide open."

CHAPTER IV.

NICK TAKES PRECAUTIONS—IN VAIN.

The German Imperial liner, *Crown Princess Wilhelmina*, had reached her dock in Nikobo late that afternoon. The great detective had been on board the vessel at the time, having gone down the harbor in an official tug, and climbed on board, along with the health officers at quarantine.

He had experienced no difficulty in satisfying himself that Eunice Benedict was among the passengers. The show girl could not, by any stretch of imagination, be mistaken for the 'modest violet' type of womanhood. She was quite willing to be seen, for she was one of the most enthusiastic advocates of publicity. She had indeed sailed under another name, but that did not prevent her from flaunting her beauty on the deck, and Nick had seen too many of her photographs to be in doubt as to her identity.

He quietly found a means of ascertaining the location of her cabin, and thereafter kept at least one eye on it. He had noted no suspicious goings or comings, but the steward who served that cabin also came in for some quiet watching. There was good reason to suspect him, in view of the program outlined in the remarkable agreement which had fallen into the detective's hands.

Nothing of any importance had occurred, however, before the landing was made. Chick and Patsy had both been at the dock, in disguise, and, thus three pairs of trained eyes had noted Eunice Benedict's departure from the vessel, in company with her maid.

Nick had wondered whether Simpson or his wife would be on hand to welcome the girl, but, as it turned out, neither of them was in evidence. Eunice was greeted affectionately by a very dapper young man, whose name and antecedents were well known to Carter. He had acquired some fame as a man about town, and was possessed of a large fortune. The various lobster palaces along the Great White Way knew him intimately. It was not surprising, therefore, that he should have come to the dock to meet the show girl, or that he should take her to Manhattan in his showy touring car.

At any rate, there did not seem to be anything suspicious in the circumstance. Eunice could not very well have many pounds of gum opium concealed about her scantily dressed person, and as for undeclared jewels, that was a matter for the customs inspectors. Nick had shown them in the case of the Simpsons, how to handle such a situation, and he had no desire to interfere in this case.

The girl's baggage underwent the usual inspection, and she was soon allowed to depart. Evidently the customs men were either unfamiliar with her relationship, or else they thought that Mrs. Simpson had received a severe enough lesson to prevent her sister from trying any similar tricks so soon. However it was, they did not submit her to any unusual ordeal.

The hundreds of passengers and their friends gradually dispersed, and soon the great dock hummed with the activities which always characterize the arrival of an ocean steamship, and of which the general public knows little.

There was great scurrying to and fro, as tons upon tons of the heavier baggage were removed, after which the miscellaneous cargo itself was tackled, and unloading began in earnest.

Nick and his two assistants hung around unobtrusively as the twilight deepened, and the lights sprang up in the pier shed and on board the steamer. They did not look for anything to happen in their line for some hours yet, though they were prepared for the unexpected. Every one seemed to be too busy now to have any time for unauthorized excursions to the Waterside House, but that did not lead to any relaxation of the detectives' vigilance.

The hours dragged on, and still there were no developments. Finally, the three detectives divided forces. Patsy betook himself to a neighboring pier, after hiring a motor boat. From his new position he was enabled to keep a watch on the water. He devoted himself to that because it was possible that the smugglers' plans had changed, and that they would try to remove the opium on the riverside and transfer it directly to Chinatown, instead of taking it first to Schroeder's hotel.

Chick took up his station at a point from which he could command the land approach to the dock, while Nick made his way directly to the Waterside House, to keep track of affairs there, so far as possible.

All three of the detectives were in the characteristic dress of seafaring men on shore. Their features were thoroughly disguised, and they walked with a slight nautical roll—unmistakable, but by no means exaggerated. Their disguises were the best they could have assumed in that locality.

Garbed in a loose navy-blue suit, made of a heavy material much favored by sailors, and wearing a gray flannel shirt, Nick boldly entered the bar of the hotel. He asked for a glass of beer, not because he wanted it, but because he was obliged to keep up appearances.

When this was consumed he leaned confidentially over the bar.

"Say, friend," he said, addressing the bartender, "got a room in the back anywhere, that we can use to-night? I am expecting some guys along here pretty soon, and we want to have a quiet game."

"Nothing doing!" stolidly replied the German behind the bar. "We only have two private rooms, and both of them's engaged for to-night."

Nick knew at once from the man's manner that he was lying.

"That's too bad," the detective commented. "Guess we'll have to go somewheres else."

"You can hire a room upstairs," suggested the bartender.

"That's so. Guess we'll do that. You see, we're just off the old *Asa Huntington;* and we're looking for something to do to-night."

The vessel he named was a well-known tramp freighter, just in that day from some South American port. Its home dock was close to the Waterside House, and Nick, therefore, counted on the bartender's familiarity with the name.

"Reckon I'll hang around here and see what the boys say when they come," he added.

The bartender nodded as he wiped off the surface of the bar, and went about his business. Nick lounged about for a few minutes, nibbling at the free lunch set out more or less temptingly, and carelessly studied the various apologies for art which adorned the walls of the saloon. Presently, however, he passed the bartender to whom he had spoken, and strolled toward the door.

"Looks as if I'd have to go out and hustle the fellows up," he explained, over his shoulder.

Once outside he slipped around the corner of the building. This was not his first visit to the Waterside House, and consequently he had already obtained a more or less accurate idea of the arrangement of the rooms on the ground floor, especially those in the neighborhood of the bar.

He had reason to believe that the barkeeper had told the truth when he had said that there were only two private rooms back of the saloon, but he did not credit the statement that both of them were in use, or engaged for that night. He knew from the arrangement, that both of them must have windows on the side street, into which he had turned, and he meant to judge for himself, at least as to their present occupancy.

Heavy shades were drawn over the windows, but both rooms were evidently lighted. No sounds came from either of them, however, although it was then after nine o'clock.

"I have a notion that I see through their game," thought Nick. "There is a side entrance just back of these two rooms, and the street is dimly lighted here.

Probably one of the rooms is reserved for the turning over of the opium to-night—if the *Crown Princess Wilhelmina* really brought over any this trip. The other rooms adjoins it and the partitions are doubtless comparatively thin. Whether that particular bartender is in the secret or not, Schroeder has doubtless instructed him not to allow the second room to be used, for fear its occupants may overhear what was going on in the other, and become a little too much interested in the proceedings there."

If that was the case, Nick at least had a definite idea what portion of the hotel was to be watched most carefully. Nevertheless, he did not hang around in the side street. He strolled about in the neighborhood for a few minutes, and then returned to the hotel.

This time, however, he made his way to the main lobby, and engaged a room on the second floor, almost directly over the two private rooms behind the bar.

"I'm looking for some fellows to make up a game," he remarked, with a wink, "and we want to be as near the 'wet goods' as we can get."

The clerk grinned knowingly, and handed him a key, attached to which was a stamped metal tag at least two and a half inches in diameter. Armed with this conspicuous evidence of his good faith, Nick made his way through the corridor to the saloon, and exhibited the key and tag to his own particular bartender.

"Got a room," he said. "You haven't seen anything of my pals yet, have you?"

The German shook his head.

"Well, if anybody asks for Hank—that's me—tell them to hang around."

With that he once more went out into the night, confident that he had aroused no suspicions.

CHAPTER V.

ENEMIES FROM THE ORIENT.

Chick, meanwhile, had been giving an imitation of a New York policeman on "fixed-post duty." He had managed, unobserved, to pick the lock of a little contractor's shanty at the corner of a building excavation, directly across the street from the entrance to the *Crown Princess Wilhelmina's* dock, and had found it possible to keep an eye on the latter, through a convenient knot hole.

Several hours passed uneventfully, and it was a few minutes after twelve o'clock before anything occurred to rivet his attention.

Even then, he was puzzled at first, by the development. To be sure a little pushcart hove in sight, piled high with small, foreign-looking packages, and trundled along by a big man in the rough garb of a longshoreman. Instead of coming from the pier at which the vessel had docked, however, it emerged from the one at the right.

Chick could see the man with the pushcart halt for a moment and exchange a few words with the watchman at the pier entrance, after which the two separated, and the cart went bumping along over the uneven pavement, in the direction of the Waterside Hotel.

The explanation dawned upon Chick in a flash, as the longshoreman started off. The *Crown Princess Wilhelmina* was a very large vessel, which fitted rather snugly into her berth. That meant that there was a dock close on either side of the steamer, and consequently it would have been just about as easy to have removed the contraband opium to Pier 13 as to Pier 14. Indeed, there had probably been some good reason for removing it to the former.

All the active unloading was going on on the other side, which would have left the down-river side of the ship comparatively deserted and unwatched. Also, it might be that the watchman on Pier 13 was in the pay and confidence of the smugglers, while his fellow at Pier 14 was not. At any rate, the suspicious-looking cart had been allowed to proceed.

On second thought, Chick had little doubt that the cart's load consisted of Persian-gum opium. Fortunately the door by which he had entered the shed was on a side away from the piers. That enabled him to leave the little structure without being seen. After peering around the corner and waiting until the watchman at Pier 13 turned away, the young detective came boldly out of his hiding and sauntered along the street parallel to the water, in the wake of the man with the pushcart, but on the other side of the street.

In the course of the next two or three blocks he glanced quickly about him several times, in an effort to make sure that he was not being shadowed. He saw nothing to indicate that he was. As for the longshoreman—if that were really the man's trade—he did not seem to be afraid that any one would develop any embarrassing interest in his doings. He slouched along steadily, with hunched shoulders, apparently looking neither to the right nor to the left.

He did not make directly for the Waterside House, however, but turned away from the river at a point a couple of blocks from Schroeder's hotel. He pushed the cart a block to the west, then changed direction again to the south, and this street was followed for three blocks, and then the man turned east, in the direction of the river.

His course brought him to the river front again, a block beyond the hotel. Having proceeded in this roundabout course in approved style, he now lost no time in hitting for his destination. He passed the main entrance of Schroeder's place, turned into the dark street at the side, and approached the small door which Nick had previously noted.

By that time Chick was not as easy in his mind as he might have been. The streets traveled had been deserted for the most part, and in spite of his best efforts it would have been a comparatively simple matter for the longshoreman to have guessed that he was being tracked, had he paid any attention to what was going on.

Chick, therefore, found himself wondering whether the man had made that detour, simply as a routine protection in accordance with general instructions, or whether he had done so to satisfy himself that he had a second shadow on his heels.

If the latter turned out to be the case, it was certain that trouble was in store.

The man left the pushcart outside of the hotel, knocked at the door, and was quickly admitted. Nick's assistant would have liked to risk a closer inspection of the pushcart's load, but was obliged to resist the temptation, for he did not know at what moment the longshoreman, or others, might emerge from the building, and, consequently, he subsided into a dark nook formed by one of the entrances to a big old foundry building across this narrow street.

His heart thumped when he found a second later that he was not alone in his retreat. Another figure was lurking there, flattened against the wide recesses made by the door. Chick's eyes were, as yet, unaccustomed to the dull gloom in the doorway, and strain them as he would, he could not make out the man's features. A familiar chuckle came to his ears a moment later, however.

"Well met, Chick!" came the low-toned words. "We seem to have similar tastes in the retirement line."

"Hello, chief!" breathed Chick, with a note of relief. "I couldn't make you out, and thought for a moment that I was in bad."

"Not yet," was the reply. "We may both be before we get through, though. You never can tell about these little excursions into the enemy's country."

He had just had time to tell his assistant about the two private rooms that were "engaged," but unoccupied, when their hearts stopped beating and every muscle in their bodies grew tense.

They had heard a furtive shuffle behind them, in the dark, and supposedly deserted, foundry building. That was enough in itself to bring them up short, but before they could do more than turn part way around, a bolt rasped back, and the wide, low door against which they had been leaning, swung suddenly inward.

Nick and his assistant jumped back instinctively, as a number of silent figures sprang to the opening. Simultaneously they heard similar doors opening to left and right of them. The side of the old foundry was studded with such doors, which had doubtless been placed there to facilitate the departure and receipt of freight.

Before the detectives fully realized what was happening, they found enemies in the rear of them, as well as in front. The opening of the other doors had been a signal for a flank movement that was cleverly timed and executed.

The very appearance of their assailants would have struck terror to most hearts, even the stoutest, for nothing more formidable could easily be imagined.

They found themselves beset on all sides by stealthy, quick-moving, ominously quiet Chinamen, most of whom were clad only in loose trousers, and were naked to the waist. Their muscular shoulders and chests had an oily gleam, as the faint light from the distant street lamp struck those who were circled about behind the two Carters. Evidently they had so denuded and greased themselves in preparation for a desperate struggle, in which they meant to have every possible advantage. That is an old trick of the Chinese pirates, just as it was with the American Indians, and it has served them in good stead on countless occasions.

The Orientals closed in upon the two with relentless suddenness. There must have been at least a dozen of them, all told, and before Nick and Chick could no more then jerk out their automatics, a deadly scrimmage had begun.

They had no time to fire. Nearly a score of hands were clawing at them, and half a dozen bodies were pressed uncomfortably close about them. Plainly the attack had been premeditated and carefully thought out. The very first moves proved that, as did the fact that those behind immediately began to push, while those in the doorway gave back slowly but noticeably.

The intention was obviously to force the detectives out of the open street and into the building, where they could be attended to more safely, and at leisure.

Nick and his assistant, being outnumbered at least six to one, saw at once that they could not prevent this. They fought every inch of the way, as best they could, but the Chinamen's tactics were curiously like those of football players trying to push a hard-pressed runner over the goal line. They packed themselves so closely about the Americans that the latter could not get in a single telling blow, could hardly breathe, in fact, while all the time they were being borne forward into the yawning doorway.

For the time being that seemed to be all that these Celestials desired. Their furtive, slinking natures demanded, first of all, that whatever they were about to do should be done under cover, and in a corner as screened as possible from the public gaze.

They had their will soon enough, and seemingly before any one had been attracted by the almost noiseless struggle. A final and more powerful shove carried the detectives and their immediate antagonists through the doorway, after which darkness closed about them as the three doors closed, one after another.

Nick and Chick could not see their assailants now because the nearest window was many yards away, and it admitted very little light, at best. They could feel them, however—and smell them, too, for that matter.

The outcome was practically a foregone conclusion. The attack had been too sudden and unusual, and the number of the attackers too great, to leave much room for successful resistance. The detectives' arms had been seized the first thing, and the fingers which held their automatics had been grabbed and fairly crushed against the metal of their weapons.

Now they were jumped upon and pushed down by some, and pulled down by others, who dove into the writhing mass and fastened themselves, leachlike, to their straining legs. Had there been any onlookers, with light enough to see what was going on in the old foundry, the scene would doubtless have resembled one of those familiar pictures of a pack of hounds pulling down a stag.

Nick and his assistant had not attempted to call for help before being forced into the building. In the first place, they were not given to that sort of thing, but always preferred to fight their own battles, conscious, among other things, that such help as they might be able to summon would ordinarily prove far from efficient in the kind of struggles in which they were involved.

In the second place, they had kept silent because the Waterside House was the nearest occupied building, and they knew there was little or nothing to be hoped for from that quarter. The cry would have been much more likely to bring half a dozen more enemies than a single friend.

They were still fighting silently now, because words would have required breath that could be much better spent in other ways, and would incidentally have been worse than useless. The Chinamen were as quiet as ever. Hardly a word of their usual rapid jargon escaped them, and, for the most part, they contented themselves with more or less expressive grunts.

Presently the detectives were flat on the floor, Nick on his back, Chick on his face. A burly Chinaman knelt squarely on the body of each one, and others pegged down their wrists and ankles in similar fashion.

The first strenuous act was over, and it only remained to be seen what plans the captors had for their prisoners.

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE AND TERRIBLE PLIGHT.

Nick and Chick were bound in short order, not in the usual American fashion, however. Instead, their arms were plastered to their sides, and held there by coil after coil of rope, as if they were mummies being wrapped up. Their limbs were treated in a similar fashion, and primitive gags were tied into their mouths.

They were then half dragged and half carried by means of long-nailed hands, inserted under their bonds. Their captors handled them like bales of goods, as well they might. Chick afterward declared that he expected during the process to have a hook poked into him at any moment.

They were thus hustled along unceremoniously until they reached the center of the one great room, which took up the whole area of the building. Their eyes were becoming a little more accustomed to the gloom by this time, and they were using them to the best advantage they could. Nothing else was left for them to use, as a matter of fact.

They thus saw dimly, after a few moments, that they had been dropped at the side of a curious metal contrivance, with a flat surface raised two or three feet from the floor. This platformlike expanse was perhaps four feet wide and a little over six feet long.

Whatever its nature, the two detectives soon found themselves laid out on it, on their back, side by side.

"Now I wonder what is coming," thought Nick, with a grim attempt at a smile, that was spoiled by the cords which bound the gag in his mouth. "One would think we were victims laid out on an altar for sacrifice. Well, maybe we are. I long ago gave up trying to fathom the workings of a Chinaman's mind."

The dozen or so Celestials were now grouped about them, and suddenly became talkative. They might as well have remained silent, though, for all the good it did the two bound listeners, for they confined themselves strictly to a peculiar lingo of their own, and not to the Chinese language, with which the detective was familiar.

The epidemic of chatter and jabber ceased in half a minute as unexpectedly as it had begun, and two or three of the Chinamen slipped away from the group, while the others drew back a little and formed an expectant circle.

Nick turned his head and stared for a moment at his assistant, then turned it once more in the opposite direction. He dimly discerned the watchful, waiting attitude of their captors on that side, but he saw something more, which he had not noticed before.

Close to the metal block, or platform, on which he and his companion were stretched, was a heavy iron upright, which vanished into the deeper gloom under the low roof. Something about its appearance, taken in connection with the hard, flat bed on which he lay, stirred the detective's memory in a very unpleasant fashion. He stiffened involuntarily, and his blood ran cold.

He had at last made a shrewd guess as to the nature of the thing to which they had been so strangely introduced. Moreover, he believed now that he could forecast the next move countemplated by the Chinamen. That belief became a practical certainty when the purring of an electric motor, close at hand, presently broke the silence. He wondered if Chick realized what was in store for them, but more than that he wondered how far these ruthless Orientals meant to carry the thing.

A slight noise over their heads next riveted the attention of both detectives. The sound was that of smooth, well-oiled machinery. Almost immediately a mass, blacker than the surrounding blackness, seemed to detach itself from its background above their heads, and with a slow, relentless movement, descended toward them.

There was no longer any room for doubt. The menacing thing that was bearing down upon them was an electrically controlled trip hammer, and they were lying directly in its path, on its bed, so to speak.

Had it been allowed to descend with full force they would have been crushed as flat as a sheet of paper in a moment, but as it was, their captors were plainly bent upon letting it down as slowly and carefully as possible.

Their ultimate aim remained in obscurity. They might intend to torture their prisoners by this slow means—in an effort to make them show the white feather, with the idea of crushing them in the end, when their cruelty had been satisfied. Or they might simply be amusing themselves at the detectives' expense, with no intention beyond that.

In any case, the positions of Nick and Chick were distinctly unenviable ones. At any moment the trip hammer might get out of the control of these unpracticed hands and beat out the life of those under it, as well as all semblance of humanity.

Down it came, while two pairs of fascinated eyes stared upward, watching its progress. It seemed to pause once or twice and then to start with a slight jerk that did not tend to quiet the nerves. On the whole, however, its descent was fairly uniform.

Presently it was within two or three feet of the two upturned faces, and still it continued to descend. In a few seconds barely six inches separated it from its victims' bodies—if victims they were to be.

Before that, Nick and his assistant had instinctively turned their faces aside. If the trip hammer were actually going to descend upon them, even at that rate of speed, they did not care to have it strike their faces if they could help it; and they knew that it would not matter very much what its speed, or lack of it, as a matter of fact, for if it were allowed even to settle upon them gently, with its full weight, the great bulk of it would be almost sure to mean instant death. Nevertheless, they could not resist the impulse to take this useless precaution.

They held their breaths at the last, and were still holding them as the huge mass hesitated for an instant, just short of their waiting bodies, then came on relentlessly and set its agonizing weight upon them.

The pressure became almost unbearable. They were holding their breaths no longer now, for they had expelled the air from their lungs and contracted their chests as far as possible to keep them from being crushed in. As it was, it seemed as if every bone in their bodies must soon be broken.

Was this the end? After all of their superb struggles, often against overwhelming odds, were they doomed at last to die in this ignominious fashion, pressed into a mass of pulp between two layers of iron, against which it was hopeless to struggle?

It seemed so. Nevertheless, they unflinchingly faced what seemed to be their fate. Their teeth were clenched, their eyes closed, and the blood in their veins appeared to have stopped its flow.

Suddenly, however, the trip hammer ceased to descend, and once more the Chinamen burst into their characteristic chattering. Clawlike fingers were outstretched from both sides. They felt of the detectives' bodies and tried to push in between them and the mass of iron above. Obviously the Celestials were endeavoring to ascertain just how hard the trip hammer was pressing upon their prisoners. Now a match was scratched at Nick's side, and its flickering light illuminated his face for a few minutes. Another match rasped and Chick experienced a similar inspection.

The matches went out, and a conference followed—or so the detectives judged. It looked as if their captors considered it important to apply just so much pressure and no more. If so they must have decided that their captives' plight was satisfactory, from their standpoint, for the trip hammer was neither raised nor lowered.

Not until then had Nick and his assistant heard a single word of English, but when this decision was arrived at, a burly Chinaman squatted at Nick's side, thrust his face close to the narrow space between the two masses of iron, and became intelligible.

"You no like that, mebbe?" he said. "Too bad! No can help, though. We savvy you and you stay here till China boys get ready to drop this thing. Nobody find you. To-mollow Slunday. Nobody come here. See later! Glood-by!"

An inhuman chuckle followed the words, and was echoed all about the shadowy circle. That was all. Padding sounds followed as the Chinamen slipped away in their soft-footed shoes, and then came the distant noise of opening and closing doors. As near as they could tell, the detectives were alone.

It did not require much thought to determine what had happened. The presence of all of these Chinamen in Nikobo was very significant. The possibility which Nick had foreseen must have become a fact. In other words, the crafty and wily merchant of Chinatown, Li Yung, must have laid a trap for them, and must, in some way, have penetrated their disguises.

Nick and his assistant had to admit to themselves that they had been outgeneraled. To be sure, they had foreseen the possibility of something of this sort, but they had never dreamed that it would take place in Nikobo, and at the very outset of their work. They had not showed their hands to any extent. Nick had believed that the precautions he had taken at the hotel were quite sufficient to serve the purpose, and to throw Oscar Schroeder and his men off the scent.

He had looked for trouble to come from that quarter, if any at all, but his real expectations had naturally been that they could trace the opium to Chinatown without much trouble, and would only have to reckon with Li Yung there.

They had not expected the wealthy and influential Chinaman to submit to arrest without a great struggle, but it had not occurred to them that he would foresee their movements to this extent, and send his henchmen over to Nikobo to nip their attempt in the bud.

It was all too evident that he had done so, however. The presence of the dozen or so Orientals could mean nothing else. Moreover, the whole program had been arranged with an uncanny foresight, which told of an Oriental mind behind it, and even if Schroeder's immediate followers had taken a hand in it—which they had not done—there would still have been no doubt that Li Yung was at the bottom of it.

If that were the case the detectives did not need to be told that they were in a desperate plight indeed. Even the presence of that crushing weight on their bodies was not required to convince them of that, although it certainly helped to do so.

Escape was utterly out of the question, so far as their own unaided efforts were concerned. Had the weight of the trip hammer not been so great, and its pressure so severe, they could have been able, in the end, to work their way out from under it, but the impossibility of that was so evident that they did not give it another thought.

They did not know why their captors had left them there without finishing the job, unless it were merely to torture them. Whatever the motive might be, they knew the Chinese character too well to look for mercy. Their only hope, therefore, was in the arrival of help from the outside, before it was too late, and even that seemed vague, and not very promising.

If their movements had been watched so carefully as the attack upon them seemed to indicate, it appeared likely that Patsy had also fallen into the hands of their enemies, or would do so the moment he showed any curiosity in regard to the whereabouts of Nick and Chick.

And yet, Patsy was the only one who had any detailed knowledge of their plans. The Nikobo police had not been taken into their confidence because Nick had not anticipated any open hostilities in the New Jersey city, until after the Chinatown end of the case had been disposed of. Besides, it would have necessitated the unwinding of a lot of red tape to have enlisted the services of the police in two States at one time.

The New York police had been informed of the possibility of trouble in Chinatown that night, and the captain in charge of the Elizabeth Street police station had doubtless held himself in readiness. He, however, could do them no good in Nikobo, and neither could Jack Wise, Nick's "society" assistant, who had been detailed to keep an eye on Li Yung's place, in advance of the anticipated doings there.

Indeed, it was more than possible that Jack himself had already fallen into the clutches of Li Yung's men.

All in all, therefore, the plight of Nick and Chick seemed about as desperate and hopeless as could easily be imagined.

CHAPTER VII.

PATSY MAKES AN ARREST.

Patsy Garvan's post of duty was at the end of Pier 15. In other words, the dock at which the *Crown Princess Wilhelmina* was unloading was between the young detective and that which had been utilized for the removal of the smuggled opium. Consequently the great bulk of the vessel itself had hidden from Patsy all evidences of the removal of the contraband drug, and had left him in complete ignorance of what was going on.

Under ordinary circumstances that fact would not have been of any great consequence, for Patsy had been assigned to the pier for a definite purpose—namely, to watch for any possible attempt to remove the opium by way of the river. He was, therefore, doing his duty, even though that duty proved to be unavailing.

As it happened, however, his position rendered him unusually incapable of rising to the emergency which developed. The pier on which he was stationed was a long one, and he was at its extreme end, hundreds of feet out over the river. He could command an unobstructed view only of the piers immediately on either side of him, and nothing suspicious went on there. He felt singularly out of it as the night wore on, for he knew that he was a sort of prisoner himself.

He had made his way secretly to his post, for there was a watchman at the shoreward end of the pier, who must know, if possible, nothing about Patsy's absence. For all the detectives knew, that watchman might be in the pay of the smugglers, and accordingly it was not safe to take him into their confidence.

Young Garvan had approached the pier in his hired motor boat, and had hidden the little craft underneath the flooring. He himself was obliged to keep hidden, especially when the watchman made his regular rounds, and he would not have dared to make his way to the street end of the pier, even if there had been no watchman there. That would have taken him away from his post, and the very thing he was there to prevent might have happened in his temporary absence.

No wonder the hours passed uneventfully for Patsy, and no wonder he chafed at his ignorance of the events on shore. Being a good soldier, however, and accustomed to obeying orders without question—unless something unforeseen developed—he stuck it out as patiently as he could.

At last, daylight came, and with it his release. There was practically no likelihood now that any attempt would be made to remove the opium. If it had not already been taken from the ship it either did not exist, or else the smugglers were waiting for the next night to come.

Nick's young assistant watched his chance, slipped over the side of the pier, and dropped into the motor boat. He unfastened the painter, and pushed and pulled by means of the piles until the boat was free to drift with the current. He narrowly missed the piling at the end of Pier 14, and continued to drift silently for several hundred yards. Then he started his engine and skirted the docks for a short distance, until he passed those controlled by the German Imperial line. There was now no longer any danger of his being observed by some watchman or other person in the employ of the smugglers. Therefore, he boldly approached the dock, secured his boat, and made for the street. He soon encountered a watchman, but the latter was not disposed to question his presence there after Patsy showed his special badge.

Young Garvan, being in disguise, was now free to scout about and see what he could learn. It was not yet five o'clock, however, and few persons were astir.

Besides, it was Sunday morning, and the streets were naturally more deserted than usual.

As Patsy neared the Waterside House he exercised all of his caution. He was, of course, in ignorance of all that had occurred during the night, but he realized the possibility that there had been some kind of a passage at arms between the other detectives and Oscar Schroeder's employees or followers. Accordingly, he felt it necessary to be on his guard, even though it was now broad daylight.

Sabbath quiet seemed to pervade the German's hotel, and its immediate neighborhood, as well as the rest of the city. Patsy sauntered past the main entrance, keeping to the other side of the street, and then continued on around the block in such a way that he presently found himself in the side street which had been the scene of the midnight attack on Nick and Chick.

Everything was still and seemingly deserted there, as well as elsewhere. The occupants of the hotel all appeared to be sleeping, and the long, low foundry building across the way presented a blank wall, for the most part, with only an occasional window thickly incrusted with dirt, and festooned with cobwebs.

If Patsy could have known what these long, expressionless walls were hiding from his sight, there might have been another story to tell, but as it was he walked along steadily, whistling in a subdued key, as he went, and paying little attention to the building on his left.

His most searching glances were naturally directed toward the hotel, and as a result he nearly came to grief.

He had reached a point about a hundred yards from the corner of the main street upon which the hotel fronted, and was just opposite to one of the main door niches in the long side wall of the foundry, when he heard a slight, suggestive rustle, coming from just behind his left shoulder. He sprang hastily toward the curb, and swung around with the same movement.

He was just in time to confront a crouching figure as it lunged forward, its upraised hand holding one of the most innocent-looking but deadly of weapons, a little bag of sand. Thus, to Patsy's quick hearing, the intended blow did not descend on the back of his head, or neck, as his would-be assailant had doubtless planned it should. The blow was struck now, to be sure, but face to face. In fact, it merely fanned the empty air, for Patsy saw it coming, and contrived to be absent when it arrived.

The man's lunge carried him a little past the young detective, who took occasion to plant his fist, with considerable force, on the right side of the ruffian's jaw.

The man, whose looks plainly betrayed him to be a drug fiend of some sort or other, went down with a muffled groan that was half a snarl. Patsy was leaning over him in a moment, and he had the satisfaction of seeing that he was more than half unconscious. The sandbag was quickly slipped into his own pocket, and a bulldog revolver followed it.

The fellow was now disarmed and helpless for the time being, but Patsy suspected that the experience had not been in the nature of a mere holdup, for the purpose of robbery. The detective suspected that this man was in the employ of the German and had been lurking in one of the doorways of the foundry for the purpose of keeping an eye out for any one who might show too much interest in the hotel. If that were the case, he might not be alone in his watch, and reënforcements might arrive at any moment.

Young Garvan did not wish to become involved any more than he could help. His keen mind reasoned that this man would not have been there if Nick and Chick had succeeded in shadowing the place without arousing suspicions, any more than he would have been, if the hotel had been raided, and the ringleaders in the plot captured.

He feared, therefore, that something had gone wrong, but that was all the more reason why he should keep out of trouble.

If, by any mischance, his chief and Chick had fallen into the hands of the gang, he must keep out of these hands.

Consequently, his cue seemed to be to treat the affair as an ordinary holdup, and to act accordingly. Without seeming to glance again at the hotel windows, he caught the dazed rascal by the collar and began dragging him toward the main street. Had he heard anything to indicate that he was about to be interfered with, he would not have hesitated to drop his burden and run, though he was intent now upon getting away from the neighborhood without running any further risks of capture.

Nothing occurred to alarm him, though, and when he reached the corner, he saw a policeman stalking along, a block away. The bluecoat's presence afforded a happy solution of the difficulty. When the policeman caught sight of Patsy and the limp, dragging figure, he broke into a dog trot, and soon came up.

"Here, what's this?" he demanded. "What are you doing with that man?"

"Keeping him for you, officer," Patsy replied, with one of his disarming Irish smiles. "He was lying in wait for me, back there, and tried a little funny business with a sandbag. Here it is, and here's his revolver, which I also took the liberty of appropriating."

"You did, eh? And who the devil are you? You're a little too sure of yourself, young fellow. How do I know them things ain't yours, and that it was you who mussed this fellow up?"

"Oh, I mussed him up, all right, I'll admit that; but it was with me good right fist, and not any of his junk. If you don't believe me, just give this badge the once over."

And with that the young detective pulled his coat aside a trifle and flashed the emblem of his authority.

"Patsy Garvan, Nick Carter's left bower, at your service!" he added, with a grin.

The bluecoat drew back and touched his cap.

"That's a horse of another color," he said, with marked respect. "What's up?"

"I wish I knew just what was up," Patsy replied. "I'm going to appear against this fellow as a common holdup man, but I'm pretty sure that was not his game. Do you know that ugly mug of his?"

"Sure. His name's Schultz—Jake Schultz. His record ain't none too good over here."

Patsy wanted to ask if Schultz was known as a hanger-on of Oscar Schroeder's, but he thought it best not to, for he remembered Schroeder's political influence, and he feared that the policeman could not be trusted to keep his tongue in his head. Instead, he contented himself with asking:

"Were the chief and Chick mixed up in anything over here last night, so far as you know?"

The bluecoat shook his head.

"Haven't heard of it," he answered.

"Was there any disturbance of any sort in this neighborhood last night?"

"Not that I know of. If there was we certainly didn't get a look-in."

"I'm afraid my hunch wasn't worth much, then."

Schultz was getting sullenly and groggily to his feet now. He was taken to the nearest police station, Patsy going along. There a routine charge was preferred against him, and he was locked up.

Patsy made some more discreet inquiries of the sergeant in charge, but learned nothing further. Then he betook himself to a drug store, routed out the night clerk, paid him generously for his broken sleep, and got the use of the telephone.

He gave Nick's Manhattan number, and was soon talking with Joseph, the detective's butler. From him he learned that neither Nick nor Chick had returned, or sent word during the night. That looked bad. Joseph reported, moreover, that Jack Wise had called up and brought him out of bed about half past two. Wise had asked about the others, and had declared that he had just seen something being taken into Li Yung's place. He believed it to be the expected opium, and was mystified and worried by his failure to see anything of the detectives in the locality.

Patsy's face grew long as he heard this news, for he knew only too fell what it must mean.

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK WISE HAS BAD NEWS.

Something was wrong—that was plain.

Young Garvan realized immediately, as he stood with the receiver to his ear, that the gang had done something out of the ordinary in order to keep Nick and Chick from following them to Manhattan, if Jack was right about the nature of the stuff that had been taken into the Chinaman's place at that untimely hour.

It would have taken a good deal to make him believe that his chief had simply been thrown off the scent. Therefore, he reasoned that there must have been some serious reason for the failure of both of the missing detectives to show up in Chinatown, and, following that line, he quickly came to the conclusion that trouble might have occurred in Nikobo, after all, in spite of the ignorance of the police.

If that were the case——

But he did not continue his speculations any longer just then.

"Did Wise give a number that would reach him?" he asked the butler.

"Yes," replied Joseph, and repeated it, reading it from the pad attached to the phone.

Patsy took it down.

"There's something a little queer about the night's work, I'm afraid," he told the servant, in response to the latter's anxious question. "Don't worry, though! I'm going to try to reach Wise. If I don't succeed, and he calls up again, have him tell you definitely where I can find him. I'll get the word from you later on, if necessary."

He hung up the receiver, then took it from its hook again immediately, and gave the number Jack had left with the butler. He did not have much hope of reaching Nick's wealthy assistant in that way, for he assumed that Jack would have been on the move in the meantime. He was considerably surprised, therefore, when Wise's familiar voice promptly answered.

"Hello, Jack! This is Patsy," he said. "I'm in Nikobo. Just had the Madison Avenue house on the wire, and Joseph gave me your number. Seen any signs of the chief or Chick yet?"

"No; don't you know anything about them?" came the startled answer.

"Not a thing. Where are you, and how do you happen to be tied to the end of a telephone wire in this fashion?"

"I'm in a dinky little office overlooking Li Yung's two entrances," was the surprising response. "Gave the fellow who rents it a ten-spot and convinced him that I wouldn't walk off with his furniture. Been here all night as snug as a bug in a rug. I thought it would be better than hanging around the streets and perhaps getting caught."

"Good eye! Now, tell me what you saw. Joseph said you thought there was something suspicious going on there about two-thirty."

"I certainly did, Patsy. Six or seven Chinamen slipped into Li's side entrance at that time. They came with a horse and wagon, and brought a number of small, foreign-looking bags, like those the chinks do up stuff in—tea and some kinds of rice, for instance. They were beating the law in some way, I'm sure, and it must have been the smuggled opium—don't you think so?"

"Haven't a doubt of it," returned Patsy. "Can you describe the horse and wagon?"

"Of course. The——"

"Never mind about it now," interrupted Garvan. "The information may help us to prove that the bags came from over here at Schroeder's. Just now, though, I'm thinking about the chief and Chick. Something has happened to them, Jack—as sure as you're a foot high!"

He then told briefly of his own experience across from the German's hotel.

"That does have an ugly look," agreed Wise. "What are you going to do? Want me to help out?"

"Yes, I think you'd better come over here, Jack. If the opium is already in Li's place nothing more is likely to develop there until we can raid the chink's. They may sneak the stuff out again and leave nothing for us to find; but we'll have to run the risk of that, I'm afraid. Anyway, that's not likely to happen until night, and I need you here."

"All right. I'll come right off the reel."

"Good! You might stop at police headquarters on your way and see if the cops have any report of trouble, in which chinks were mixed up in last night. Chick and the chief may have run into a squall on the Manhattan side of the river, for all we know, and possibly were overpowered before the cops got busy. I'll put a similar question over the phone, but you may be able to find out something at firsthand that I wouldn't be able to get at long range. Understand?"

"Perfectly. Where will I find you?"

Patsy gave the address of the drug store, and then called up police headquarters in New York.

Nothing came of his queries, though. He was informed that no disturbance any any unusual kind had been reported at all during the night in the territory between the Nikobo ferries and Chinatown, and that no Chinese had been in mischief anywhere in the big city, so far as was officially known.

When he hung up the overworked receiver for the last time the young detective had plenty to think about.

It looked as if Nick and Chick had come to harm at Schroeder's or on the river, and that the attack had been made so swiftly and quietly that it had not come to the attention of the authorities on either side of the water.

But he would have been told if the river police had had any brush with motor-boat prowlers between Nikobo and the New York side. Therefore, it seemed as if the hotel itself must have been the scene of the affair.

Ordinarily it would have been an easy matter to put the case frankly to the Nikobo police, and asked that the Waterside Hotel be raided. In this instance, however, Patsy feared, with good reason, that it would be far from such plain sailing as that.

In the first place, Oscar Schroeder was a German, and so was the chief of police, as were many of the other city officials. Also, aside from the question of nationality, and that of the German's local prominence, was the most important consideration of all—his well-known political influence.

All these things were rocks in the young detective's road, and he knew it. If he had been in a position to furnish proof that Schroeder actually had been involved in a smuggling venture the night before, that would have been a different matter, of course. The Nikobo police could hardly have refused, under those circumstances, to take action against the hotel keeper. But Patsy had no such proof. Suspicions were all he had to offer, and suspicions would not be likely to find much favor with the authorities in the New Jersey city if they pointed to a personal and political friend.

Then, if the police could not be appealed to with any real hope that they would aid, what was to be done?

The mysterious disappearance of his chief and Chick had left Patsy with little confidence that either he or Jack Wise could do much scouting about the Waterside House without getting caught and similarly disposed of. They were in disguise, to be sure, and Wise was not very well known to the criminal element; but so had the others been in disguise, and yet it did not seem to have done them much good.

Young Garvan was sure that no blunders had been made on the part of the missing detectives. They were not given to indulging in such things. Consequently, it seemed most likely that they had been nabbed in spite of their utmost precautions and in such a way that they were quickly and hopelessly overpowered, without having been given an opportunity even to create a disturbance.

If that were the fact, what chance had Patsy and Jack Wise to give any better account of themselves? And if they, too, fell into the hands of the gang, who was to get them all out?

The questions which confronted Patsy were not easy ones to answer, as may be seen. Yet they must be answered somehow, and quick action must be resorted to.

He left the drug store and paced the street outside for a few minutes. At the end of that time he had decided on his course. It was liberally spiced with danger, very likely, but that was unimportant to Patsy, and he knew it would be equally so to Jack.

The all-important thing was to locate Nick and Chick and get them out of the hands of their enemies before it was too late—if indeed it was not too late already.

CHAPTER IX.

PATSY PLAYS A BOLD HAND.

Jack Wise put in an appearance an hour later, having been delayed by his visit to police headquarters in Manhattan. Patsy was waiting for him at the door of the drug store.

"Well, have you decided how we're to 'smite the Egyptians'—that's a good Old Testament expression, isn't it?" he asked, as he alighted from his taxi.

"I think so," Patsy replied. "I don't see anything the matter with it, except that it means taking a good many chances. See if you can pick any holes in it, though. The chief's life and old Chick's may depend upon its success, and I don't want to make any bad mistakes."

He thereupon proceeded to outline his plan, sketching it for Jack's benefit with a few bold strokes. When he paused, Wise looked at him admiringly.

"Great Cæsar's ghost!" he exclaimed. "That certainly is going some! Do you think you can go through with it?"

"I believe I can, if I can only get the consent of the police over here. I don't dare tell them just who or what I'm gunning for, of course, and they may refuse unless I do. I wish I'd thought of the scheme before I turned Schultz over to them—but the policeman probably saw me before I saw him, anyway, so I could hardly have done that. I have made a few purchases here at the drug store, and that part of it is provided for."

"But where do I come in?"

"Oh, you're going to repeat your stunt of last night, with modifications. There's an unoccupied frame building across from Schroeder's lobby entrance. You can gain entrance to it somehow from the rear and keep an eye on the hotel from one of the upper windows. You'll know by that time what I'm going to look like, and I'll signal you if I need you. Don't show yourself and try to take a hand unless I do, though, because even the two of us will doubtless be pretty thoroughly outnumbered and must keep out of their talons whatever happens. If you have reason to believe that I have failed and am in bad, hurry out the back way and bring the police. I'll introduce you to them beforehand, and you'll have to bluff them into interfering whether they want to or not. See the point?"

"Trust me, Patsy, me bhoy!"

"All right, then. Come along to headquarters. We'll have to use a lot of soft soap on the chief if we're going to put this thing through. Hope he won't be too much peeved when they rout him out of bed for us—for I suppose that's where he is."

As Patsy had anticipated, the Nikobo chief of police was at home and in bed, for it was only a little after six o'clock of a Sunday morning. His deputy was on duty at headquarters, however, and reluctantly consented to telephone his superior.

Patsy did not wish to argue his case over the phone, in the hearing of the chief's subordinate; therefore he asked and finally obtained permission to call on the head of police at once. He and Jack had retained the latter's cab, and in it they made the short run to the chief's house.

Chief of Police Weiss—that was his name—received them in a bath robe. He was a corpulent, red-faced German, a little inclined to stand upon his dignity. Patsy soon managed to remove anything resembling antagonism, however, and, with some trouble, won Weiss' consent to his unusual plan.

"You have to fight fire with fire in our business," he told the German—"at least to a certain extent. That's the secret of much of Mr. Carter's success, as well as the success of the secret-service men in this country and abroad. They don't sit back and wear kid gloves, and neither do they descend to brutality in their efforts to extract information. But they do meet criminals on their own grounds, match cunning with cunning, and unusual methods with unusual methods, so far as they can conscientiously. My chief and Chick came to some harm last night over here. I'm sure of that, and I feel pretty certain that this prisoner I have told you about knows what has happened. I'm willing to take the risks I have described in order to get that information. All I ask is permission to deal with Schultz in the way I have described."

The police head was plainly between two fires. He probably knew that the prisoner was a henchman of Schroeder's, although Patsy had taken care not to mention the hotel keeper's name or indicate in any way that he believed the Waterside House to have been the scene of the encounter which had resulted in the disappearance of the two detectives. On the other hand, Weiss doubtless felt that it would not be policy to antagonize one of Nick Carter's assistants, especially in a matter which concerned the safety of the great detective himself and that of his right-hand man.

Consequently the German hemmed and hawed for some time, and then capitulated.

"All right!" he said, throwing out his hands expressively. "If it gets out that I let an outsider—or anybody else—treat a prisoner in that way, I will maybe lose mine job. But go ahead. Schultz is no account, and people is getting too soft over rascals, anyhow. I don't need this job, you understand, and if they don't like the way I runs things they can just find somebody else, already."

Young Garvan assured him that he hoped there would be no such outcome as that, and then hastened away with Jack Wise. He took with him a written order from Chief Weiss, directing that the bearer should be allowed to handle the prisoner Schultz as he chose, within reasonable limits.

Schultz was confined in one of the cells of the precinct station house to which he had originally been taken. Patsy showed his credentials, frankly told what he meant to do, and asked permission on behalf of himself and Jack to see the prisoner without witnesses. Incidentally, he hinted that if any tip as to what was going on should reach the ears of Schultz's friends he would make it decidedly warm for those responsible.

The officer in charge was evidently amazed that Weiss had given Nick's assistant any such power, but there was nothing for him to do but to grant Patsy's requests, and promise strict secrecy.

Young Garvan and Jack were thereupon conducted to the prisoner's cell and left there, locked in.

Schultz had been asleep on his cot when they entered, but had sat up defiantly at the intrusion.

"Now, look here, Schultz!" Patsy began, as soon as the sergeant had left the cell house. "You have a chance to save yourself a disagreeable experience by just answering a few questions. It won't do you a bit of good to try to protect Schroeder and the rest of his gang—understand? He's going to be where you are before the day is over. I know what you were doing outside the hotel, and why you tried to sandbag me. Now, what I want to know is: Where's Nick Carter and what have they done to him?"

The German's drug-sodden face wore a more or less blank expression at best, but he contrived to make it still more unintelligent now.

"What th' matter with you—nobody at home up here?" he demanded roughly, tapping his head. "I don't know you from a yeller dog, nor any Nick Carter, neither. I tried t' stick you up, all right—thought I'd like t' go through your clothes. But you was too quick for me. That's all there was about it, and——"

"Oh, can that stuff!" Patsy interrupted impatiently. "I haven't any time to waste, Schultz. I'll give you just three minutes—time him, Jack!—to tell me what happened to my friends last night and where they are now. If you haven't come across with it at the end of that time you'll take the consequences—and you won't like 'em!"

Confident, however, that nothing could happen to him while he was a "guest" of the city of Nikobo, the German defied him to the last. There was a jeer still on his lips when Jack Wise snapped his watch shut.

"Time's up!" Jack remarked, in a businesslike tone, making for Schultz's side.

Drugs had left the German far from a match for either of the young detectives. Wise caught his arms in a jujutsu hold before the prisoner knew what to expect, and swung him around, one arm held firmly over his shoulder. Patsy had whipped out his drug-store purchase—a hypodermic syringe charged with several hours of sleep in the form of a powerful but harmless drug. He stepped forward, jabbed the needle into Schultz's bared and helpless forearm, and pressed home the plunger.

"Let him go, Jack," he said, a moment later.

The German was wild with rage and fear when he was released, and had to be knocked out, to boot, with a clean blow on the point of the jaw. Jack had not learned boxing for nothing—at ten dollars a lesson from an ex-lightweight champion—and it was he who did the disciplining this time.

"Thought I'd just anticipate the effect of that 'dope' a little," he said quietly, as he deposited Schultz neatly on the iron cot. "Now go ahead with your private theatricals, Patsy."

Young Garvan had noticed earlier that morning that the German was about the same height and build as himself, with practically the same colored hair and eyes. Having his pocket make-up box with him, it was now merely a routine matter to transform his features into a startlingly accurate copy of Schultz's.

The latter's hair was shorter and rather clumsily cut, but Jack was able to snip Patsy's in much the same fashion. Schultz's outer clothing was then removed and donned by Patsy, who by that time exhibited his double's staring, drug-haunted eyes, hollow cheeks, and drooping mouth.

As for the German's manner of speaking and tones of voice, he had been carefully studying them as he talked with the fellow. Presently he gave his companion a sample of his ability to reproduce them, together with the unconscious rascal's expression and gait.

"You'll go, Patsy—you certainly will!" Jack informed him enthusiastically, stepping back to get the full effect. "It won't be your fault if they spot you."

Patsy was pretty sure that Schultz had not asked the police to notify Schroeder of his plight, and, now that the ruffian was unconscious, and would doubtless remain so for several hours, there was no fear of his warning any of the officials favorable to Schroeder that it was the hotel keeper who was in danger. It was to prevent that that Patsy had drugged the fellow.

Therefore, if some of the police did not smell a rat and warn Schroeder, and if no one about the hotel had seen the tables turned on Schultz, there was a fair chance of Patsy's masquerade being successful.

On his way out of the station house he coolly asked for and obtained the prisoner's revolver, sandbag, and a few of the other things that had been taken from the man. They would serve as additional means of identification.

Then, with a last warning that no attempt should be made to revive the drugged German, and that information about his arrest should not be allowed to leak out, Patsy and Jack Wise left for their respective destinations.

That of Patsy, it is needless to say, was the Waterside House itself.

CHAPTER X.

A HELIOGRAPH MESSAGE.

Patsy Garvan, in the character of Jake Schultz, approached the foundry from the rear, and, slipping around the corner, skulked along by the wall for some distance. Presently he halted and entered one of the doorway niches.

Had he but known it, he was at that moment very close to the secret which he was prepared to risk much to learn. Nick and Chick were suffering their strange and harrowing confinement not a great many feet from him.

Patsy was not aware of that, however, and even if it had occurred to him that his friends were in the foundry he would have found it impossible to see anything of them through the dingy windows.

It was now a little after seven, and the hotel showed signs of life. Patsy's attention was all directed to it. He did not know, of course, how long Schultz had been expected to guard the place, but he meant to take the bull by the horns and report to Schroeder pretty soon. First, though, he intended to maintain his present post for a while, in the hope of being seen on duty by one of the bartenders or other employees. That would tend still further to divert suspicion when he came to close quarters with Schroeder and the rest later on.

He soon had his wish. The side door of the hotel was opened, and a man, whom Patsy instantly recognized as the hotel keeper himself, stuck his head out furtively, looked up and down the street, and then beckoned to the young detective.

This was even better luck than the latter had expected, but it also meant that the supreme test of his disguise must come at once, and in broad daylight.

"Gut morning, Shake!" was the German's greeting. "How goes it?"

"All right," Patsy answered in his best imitation of Schultz's manner.

"You ain't seen anybody nosing around here already?"

"None like you mean. I followed one guy for a block or two, but I found out he was nothin' but a crook himself."

"We don't care about them kind, Hein? You kept an eye on——"

Schroeder did not finish his sentence, but nodded and jerked his thumb toward the foundry building.

Patsy's heart leaped, but he did not show his agitation as he answered carelessly:

"Sure thing! That's all right, boss."

"Gut! Come in and have a drink and a bite. There ain't nothing to fear now, *Ich denke,* but I'll have Karl on the job. Ask Frank to give you a room upstairs, and you get some sleep. Maybe I may need you later."

"All right," Patsy replied, and he followed his host into the building, after Schroeder had again looked about to see that they were unobserved.

The young detective would have given anything to avoid this further ordeal. He had guessed at once from the German's manner and gesture that Nick and Chick were in the foundry, alive or dead. The hotel keeper's half-expressed question could hardly have any other meaning, and Patsy was on fire with impatience to find his friends. If he could be left to his own devices for only half an hour—or even less time—he could easily make his way around to the back, or other side, of the foundry building and force an entrance in some way. The chances were that no one from the hotel or elsewhere would interfere with him until he had released the other detectives, if they were not beyond release.

But that was out of the question just yet. He must do nothing to arouse suspicion. Schroeder had accepted him as Jake Schultz without question, and it was not likely that any one else would penetrate his disguise, unless the knowledge of Schultz's arrest should leak out in some way. That was what Patsy most feared, and it made him doubly unwilling to suffer the necessary delay until he had been assigned to a room, and could steal away when he was supposed to be sleeping after his night's vigil.

Nevertheless, he followed Schroeder into the saloon. It was not supposed to be open on Sunday, but it would open later on for the side-door trade, and drinks could always be sent to the dining room to be served with meals. Consequently one of the bartenders was already on hand, getting the place in order for the day.

The proprietor instructed his subordinate to give "Jake" what he wanted, and then he left the room, somewhat to Patsy's relief.

The young detective ordered a beer and began munching some of the free lunch, which had already been set out on several big platters.

"So you're free, with 'nothin' to do till to-morrow,' maybe?" queried the barkeep, with a wink.

"Search me! That's for th' 'old man' t' say," Patsy answered. "Also, mebbe there'll be troubles before th' day's over."

"*Nein, nein!* Th' boss knows how to keep out of it. He will lay it all on them chinks from over th' river. Where was you when they was mussin' things up over there?"

"Oh, hangin' around," Patsy answered noncommittally. "I wonder if they got th' stuff over t' Chinatown all right?"

"I bet they did! They're a slick lot, Jake. Them Carters didn't have a chance to say '*Himmel!*'"

Here was still more light for Patsy, but he contrived to keep his interest to himself. He ordered and drank another big schooner of beer—just to keep up appearances in his German character—and managed to put away a little of the free lunch, for he was really hungry. He was very cautious in what he said, and left the saloon as soon as he dared.

He made his way reluctantly toward the hotel office, but before he got there he quickened his steps. He had thought of a plan to make good use of his enforced idleness before he could leave the building.

"Th' boss says t' give me a room, Frank," he coolly announced to the clerk, using the name which Schroeder had given him. "He wants me t' stick around to-day—an' I guess you better make it a front room, if you can. Then I can sorta keep track o' things between and mebbe see what's goin' on if I'm called. Get me?"

"Sure, Jake. I can give you a little one on the third floor."

He gave Patsy a key, and let him find the room himself. As soon as the young detective had locked himself in he took out a little pocket mirror and went to the window. In common with all of Nick's assistants he understood heliograph signaling. He meant to employ the flash system now to communicate with Jack Wise across the street. That was why he had asked for a front room.

He soon saw Jack crouching at one corner of one of the second-story windows of the old house opposite, but Wise was not looking his way. That could easily be remedied, however.

Patsy stood back as far as he could to the side of his window, so that he could not be seen from the opposite sidewalk, and held the little glass in such a way that the morning sun shone full upon it. Then he turned it about until he had sent a little ray into Jack's window. The bright beam presently rested upon Jake's face, after which Patsy manipulated it until he had attracted his fellow detective's attention and showed him where the light came from.

Jack waved his hand cautiously, whereupon Patsy began experimenting with the simple heliograph code of long and short flashes. In a minute he had found how to work the mirror successfully under existing conditions, and then, after a preliminary signal to Wise, he plunged into his message, spelling it out in flashes of light instead of the dots and dashes of the Morse telegraphic code. Here is the result:

"Hello, Jack! Have good reason to believe Nick and Chick are confined in foundry next door to left. Chinese from Manhattan captured them. Go to headquarters at once and bring squad. Not necessary to implicate Schroeder yet. I can't leave just now, but everything all right. Will join you when police come. If you understand everything wave hand three times."

Jack nodded and waved his hand. He disappeared from the window a moment later, and Patsy turned back into his own room.

Things would move rapidly from now on without his active participation until it was needed again. To be sure, when it came to slipping out of the hotel when the police arrived in the neighborhood, his actions might be questioned; but that was an everyday sort of risk that did not cause much uneasiness.

And even if he should come to grief, Nick and Chick would be saved—if it were not already too late for that!

"But they simply can't be dead!" thought Patsy, straightening his shoulders and putting aside the icy hand that seemed to be clutching at his heart.

CHAPTER XI.

QUICK WORK.

Jack Wise descended the stairs of the old house four steps at a stride, and scrambled out of the back window by which he had entered.

A few moments more and he was sprinting along the alley. When he came out into the street on which the Waterside House was located he was two blocks north of the hotel. There was no public conveyance in sight, and no signs of a garage or livery stable. A milk wagon was headed in the general direction of police headquarters, but he had much greater faith in his own legs than in that. Therefore he settled down into a long, tireless, swinging stride, which brought him to his destination in less than fifteen minutes.

The deputy chief was still on duty. Weiss was not due until nine o'clock.

"We've located Nick Carter and Chick!" Jack announced breathlessly. "They're confined in that foundry building on Front Street—Griscom & Bailey's. Some chinks from New York overpowered them last night. Hustle the reserves there at once, will you?"

He would naturally have identified the foundry by its nearness to the Waterside House, but he had not wished to suggest, even remotely, that Oscar Schroeder might be involved.

In spite of his caution, however, and the fact that he had laid the blame entirely on the Celestials, the officer looked at him in a rather queer fashion—probably because he realized at once how near the foundry was to Schroeder's hotel, and also remembered with suspicion, the arrest and subsequent treatment of the hotel keeper's hireling, Schultz.

"Where did you fellows get this tip?" he demanded. "It's mighty funny we didn't hear anything about it."

"I don't know. Patsy told me and sent me here on the jump. He's down by the foundry now. For the love of Mike, don't sit there and ask questions! Something may happen to them yet, if it hasn't already!"

The deputy grumblingly ordered out the patrol wagon and a small squad of reserves, but he took his time about it, much to Jack's disgust, and was gone from the office for five minutes or so.

At last, however, under the command of a lieutenant, the four reserves piled into the patrol wagon, and Wise followed their example.

Jack could not complain of their speed after they once got started. They were soon within sight of the foundry and hotel, and presently drew up in front of the former.

The young detective's heart sank when he saw that the approach of the patrol wagon had been watched from the steps of the hotel while it was still a couple of blocks away. It looked very much as if Schroeder had been tipped off—probably while the deputy chief had been out of the office—and if so it was more than likely that the hotel keeper had also been informed of Schultz's arrest.

In that case Patsy must be in grave danger at that very moment.

"But what can I do?" Jack thought anxiously. "I can't switch this rescue to Patsy now without a lot of explanations and time wasted. Besides, this lieutenant is probably favorable to the Dutchman, too, or has his orders from the deputy. He'd say I was dreaming, and ask for proof—which I couldn't give him, of course. Anyhow, Patsy would never forgive me if I didn't see to the chief and Chick first, no matter what was happening to him. He said he would be here. Maybe he'll come yet, but I don't like the looks of things. A police frame-up isn't an easy thing to buck."

He hastily decided to send the police into the foundry while he stayed outside on the plea—which was true enough—that he was looking for Patsy. Then, if he should hear firing or see evidences of any other disturbance, the lieutenant could hardly refuse to investigate. If he did, Wise was determined to go to Patsy's help single-handed, and take the consequences.

"What are you waiting for, Wise?" the lieutenant wanted to know.

"I'm looking for Patsy Garvan," was the reply. "You fellows find your way in somehow, and I'll join you in a minute. I don't know where to tell you to look. Look everywhere, and remember that chinks are good at hiding."

One of the front windows was pried open, and the five policemen, including the lieutenant, crawled through and began their hunt. As soon as they had disappeared, Jack strolled to the corner of the building, keeping one eye covertly on the hotel. A bartender in a white apron, several waiters, and quite a number of loungers had emerged from the Waterside House by this time. Some of them were hurrying toward the place where the patrol wagon had halted, but most of them were standing about as if to protect the hotel premises. There were no weapons yet in evidence, although the attitudes of some of the men were significant.

Patsy was still invisible, and Jack's heart sank lower. He took pains to tell all those who spoke to him that the great detective and his principal assistant were supposed to be confined in the foundry, for he did not wish to have any dirty work done in secret, and he reasoned that the men who had hurried to the scene were probably not in Schroeder's confidence.

He knew that his own connection with Nick and with the arrival of the police must be evident to the watchers about the hotel, and realized that one of them might take a shot at him at any moment. But that possibility did not interest him particularly. His mind was on other things.

As he stood on the corner, vainly cudgeling his brains to know what to do in the face of such odds, and with little or no hope of effective coöperation on the part of the police, the muffled sound of a shot reached his ears from somewhere in the interior of the hotel—and then another and another.

That was enough for Jack—too much, in fact. He turned and raced back to the open window of the foundry. With a spring, he was over the sill.

Without waiting to see whether the policemen had found his chief or not, he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Quick, men! There's a gun fight going on in that hotel across the street. I just heard three shots. Three of you come with me, but don't leave this place unguarded. Two of you must stay here."

It will be noticed that he was clever enough not to connect Patsy with the shots. On the surface, he might simply have happened to hear a fracas going on in the Waterside House and was summoning the police as a matter of course, without having any particular interest in the occurrence.

Under the circumstances, it was impossible for the lieutenant to refuse action. He called two of his men to accompany him and ordered the other two to continue the search, but to come on the run if whistled for. Then the three followed Jack at the double-quick.

Nobody was in sight immediately about the hotel when they reached the street. All of those who had been standing around had evidently gone inside. Most of them would naturally have done that out of curiosity, after hearing the shots, but their action in this instance looked suspicious, and as if some of them, at least, had gone to help out in disposing of Patsy before they could be interfered with.

Before they reached the corner of the foundry building, however, Jack Wise heard Patsy calling him. He halted in his tracks, and tried to locate the sound. At first he failed to do so, then it suddenly came to him that Garvan must be on the roof of the hotel.

"Where are you, Patsy?" he shouted back. "On the roof?"

"Yes. I'm all right and guarding the trapdoor. Have the police clean out this nest of rascals down underneath me, though, so I can come back to earth. I left Schroeder and one of his bartenders rather the worse for wear in the upper hall."

Naturally the fat was in the fire then, and there was no more room for concealment. Wise was overjoyed to hear that the young Irishman was safe, but he was afraid that he would not have an easy task with the police. He turned on the lieutenant.

"Did you hear that, officer?" he asked sharply.

"Is that your friend, Garvan?" the lieutenant demanded, in turn, with an attempt at righteous indignation. "What in thunder is he doing up there, shooting up a peaceful hotel?"

"Peaceful grandmother!" rasped Jack. "I've had all of this I propose to stand, lieutenant. I know your game and just why you're all trying to protect Oscar Schroeder. I know, too, who tipped Schroeder off. We have the fellow right where we want him and he's going to the pen for a good long term. Now, get busy and arrest him. Arrest his bartender, too, and anybody else who tries to take a hand. If you don't we'll raise such a rumpus here in Nikobo that the town will never forget it—and neither will the State. If you think this precious friend of yours, Schroeder, has more influence than Nick Carter——"

But he did not finish the sentence. The lieutenant had seen which side his bread was really buttered on, after all, and had given his men a curt order.

They met with no resistance in the hotel. The German's henchmen realized that things had gone too far to make escape from arrest possible. They probably yielded the more readily because they still counted on Schroeder's influence to get them off, however.

The proprietor was found with a hole in his arm, and his chief assistant, his son-in-law, bore in his leg a similar reminder of Patsy's skill. They and two others were placed under arrest and hurried away.

Patsy explained that he had just been "pussy-footing" it through the corridor, as he expressed it, preparatory to leaving the building as quietly as he could, when Schroeder and his son-in-law had appeared, after having received word over the phone from police headquarters. There had been some heated words and a little fist work. Patsy had seen a ladder leading to a manhole in the roof, and had made a dive for it. He had been shot at, and had returned the fire with interest, after which he had succeeded in reaching the roof unharmed. That was about all he had to say, but Jack could read between the lines, and he guessed that it had not all been as simple as Patsy chose to indicate.

As soon as the arrest had been made Patsy and Wise hurried across to the foundry, where they found that Nick and Chick had just been discovered under the big trip hammer. They were aghast at the terrible plight of the prisoners, but correspondingly relieved to learn that neither of them seemed to have suffered any great harm from their harrowing experience. There was little room for doubt, however, that they had been left in that novel and powerful vise merely to break their spirits, if possible, and that if they had remained there until the following night the Chinamen would have returned to finish their diabolical work.

As it was, Patsy immediately notified police headquarters in Manhattan, and asked that Li Yung's place should be raided without delay.

Nick and Chick were very stiff and sore from their long, cruel confinement, and did not find walking very easy. They insisted upon seeing the thing through, and were bundled into a big touring car, which took the four detectives to Chinatown in record time.

When they arrived there they found Li Yung's place of business on Pell Street already in possession of a big detachment of police and plain-clothes men. Li and his right-hand man, Sam Ling, had been arrested, but the opium had not yet been found.

Patsy and Jack Wise took a hand at that stage, and, under Nick's advice, succeeded in locating nearly two hundred pounds of smuggled opium behind secret panels in the walls.

That practically brought the detectives' end of the great smuggling case to an end.

Unfortunately they had no means of identifying the Chinamen who had attacked them and submitted them to such an unforgetable ordeal. But their employer, the rich and influential Li Yung, paid dearly for his part in the affair, as did his henchman, Sam Ling, the German ally, Schroeder, and those associated with the latter.

On the whole, it was a fairly satisfactory clean-up, and Nick and his assistants soon had the additional satisfaction of seeing the men behind it all brought to trial and convicted.

In fact, William Ashton Simpson, his wife, and the latter's sister, Eunice Benedict, are all living at the expense of the State, and by no means in the style to which they have been accustomed.

Incidentally—aside from the matter of style—the same might be said of several lesser accomplices, including a certain former steward on the *Crown Princess Wilhelmina*, an ex-night watchman on Pier 13 of the German Imperial line, and a longshoreman once employed about the Nikobo docks.

For that matter, there are several persons in far-off Bremen who have learned that Nick Carter has a long arm, and that crime is far from a permanently profitable business.

THE END.

"In Record Time; or, Nick Carter's Open Question," is the title of the story that you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 97, out July 18th. In this story the great detective is matched against some remarkably clever rogues, and he and his assistants are put to it, for a time, to get the upper hand of the crooks and to solve a baffling mystery.

The Syndicate of Crime.

Or, King Nelson's Puzzling Quest.

By HARRIE IRVING HANCOCK,

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 88 of NICK CARTER STORIES. If you have not read the preceding chapters, get the back numbers from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN BLOOD TURNS TO ICE.

"Dawson, come up here! Broke, stand facing the stairs, to head off any one who tries to come up here!"

As he issued these commands, Allan Nelson's legs vanished through the aperture.

Nimbly as a squirrel, Dawson ran up after him. He found the dark lantern on the floor, and held it up. Nelson was bending over the figure of a woman in rusty dress of black. The great detective worked with driving fingers to get the gag out of her mouth.

As that obstacle to speech came out, a moan escaped the woman. As Dawson held the light upon her, he saw that she was a woman of middle age or past, of dark features, inclining to sallowness. There was something about the cast of her features that made both observers incline to the belief that she was of one of the Latin races. She lay upon the floor, her hands fastened behind her, her feet tied and made fast to a spike driven in the floor. Her eyes were luminous with appeal. The light in them spoke eloquently of insanity.

King Nelson, who well knew what had driven her mind from its balance, felt a great wave of pity sweep over him.

"We are friends," he said, in a soft, reassuring voice. "Do not be afraid of us, poor soul!"

"I'm not," she answered, in a voice tinged with a slight accent. "I'm afraid of no one. You can't scare me."

Here she broke off into a peal of laughter that racked even the steeled nerves of her hearers.

"Torment me!" she said defiantly. "You cannot make me say what you are dying to hear. None of you can! And I am only a woman!"

Again that bloodcurdling laughter.

Wincing slightly, King Nelson remained on his knees beside her, waiting for the outbreak to subside.

"We are friends of yours," he said softly, when the woman had become quiet and lay looking up at him with her great dark eyes.

"They all are!" sneered the woman.

"Whom do you mean by 'they'?"

"All the fiends!"

"My dear creature, you have been tortured, I well know. But trust us. We will defend you, hereafter, with our lives. Try to be calm. You can tell me so much that it will be well for me to know in order to punish your enemies."

But instead of becoming calm, the woman went off into another hysterical burst of laughter.

As before, King Nelson waited patiently.

"You see," he went on soothingly, after a while, and speaking very slowly, "we are not trying to harm you. We only ask you to believe in us as your friends."

His manner was friendly and persuasive. He had known it to succeed, before, with people who had been only temporarily rendered insane through fright.

Searchingly the woman looked at him, certainly without fear. King Nelson recognized in her one of those strong wills which can defy the utmost in the way of threats or pain.

Having completed her look, however, the woman laughed long and loudly, pausing to look cunningly into the detective's face before the next outburst, which immediately followed.

With the same patience, King Nelson waited again until she was quiet. Now he decided to try a new tack.

"Think of Norwell," he urged gently, recalling the name that he had heard escape her lips while under torment. "Think of Norwell, and you will soon remember it all."

"You think I am a fool?" demanded the woman shrilly.

"No, but you are in pain; you have been cruelly tormented, and it is hard for you to think. Well, I am patient. When you can remember a little, tell me, and I will do your thinking for you."

"Who sent you?"

"Don't you remember me?"

"No; I never saw you before."

"Think! Don't you remember that I came to you in that other house? I was just setting you free, when some one came behind me and stunned me. Now, you remember me as your friend."

The woman seemed trying to think, but King Nelson, studying her eyes attentively, could not see that she yet recollected the part he had played twenty-four hours before.

"Think of Norwell," he commenced again. "Think of the duty you owe to him."

This time he could see some effect from his appeal. The woman started slightly, then looked at him more intently than ever.

King Nelson could see that she was trying to settle some problem with that cunning yet weak mental force that lunatics employ.

"Think of your duty," he repeated, "and all will be clear."

"I know my duty," she replied, after a few moments of puzzled, bewildered silence.

"What is it? Tell me."

"To guard the secret that I hold closer than life itself. So you see that you are fooled. You cannot trap it from me. Ha, ha, ha!"

So long did that maniacal laughter continue, that King Nelson looked up helplessly into the face of his assistant.

"She's hopeless," whispered Dawson.

"For the present."

"Yes; that's what I mean."

"But a week's care under a clever physician——"

"Ah, that might restore her mind!"

"We will take her from here."

"The sooner the better, I think, chief."

"In this woman, I am convinced, when she is able to speak, we will have the nub of the mystery," announced King Nelson in a whisper.

Turning around, he found the gag, quickly inserted it into the woman's mouth before she had time to object, and fastened it there. The cord at her feet he cut. Feeling under her, he found her wrists encircled by handcuffs. These he decided to leave where they were for the present.

"Take the lantern down to Reggie. Then return to help me get her down the ladder."

"Be calm, my poor friend; fear nothing," whispered the detective as they prepared to take her down the ladder.

At the foot, with the lantern in one hand and revolver in the other, stood Reggy, looking on with big eyes, but silent as an owl.

"You two go down ahead of me," ordered King Nelson, as he held the unresisting creature in his arms. "Better turn the light low as we get to the top of the last flight of stairs. As we open the door and pass outside, it won't do to have a single ray of the glim showing."

This order was obeyed. Reggy, in the lead, turned the slide around completely as they descended the flight of stairs that led to the street door.

Behind him, vigilant as a watchdog, came Dawson, while King Nelson brought up the rear, bearing the woman, now strangely motionless.

Reaching the lower hallway, they traversed it in the dark.

Then a sudden hiss that curdled the blood of the hearers sounded close beside them.

"Oh! Ouch!" gasped Reggy, in a voice of utter, uncontainable fear.

"What——" began Dawson, in shuddering accents.

"The snakes!" came in a hoarse whisper from Reggy. "I've been struck!"

"Merciful Heaven! I, too!" frantically announced the young operative.

"Turn on that light!" ordered King Nelson, his blood seeming to turn to ice as he came to a precipitous halt in the hallway.

The light was turned on with dazzling radiance, revealing Reggy and Dawson with bloodless faces.

On the floor of the hallway writhed four of the cobras, which had broken loose from upstairs.

The light came just in time for King Nelson to see one of the hideous reptiles coiled almost at his feet. He tried to dart back out of deadly harm's way, but ere he could stir the cobra's head shot out at him. He felt the sharp stab of those venomous fangs sinking deep into his flesh.

At the same moment, Reggy's faltering accents struck his ears:

"We're done for! That bite is sure death!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

A GRISLY TASK.

"In Heaven's name, let us get out of here while we may!" chattered the awe-struck Dawson.

"While we live!" backed up Reggy.

"Shall I open the door, sir?" questioned Dawson, his two rows of teeth knocking against each other.

"And allow these fearful reptiles to get loose on the community?" demanded King Nelson sternly.

"Ouch!" yelled Dawson, as one of the cobras bit him again. He tried wildly to stamp the life out of the reptile, only to get a third bite, as swiftly delivered as the lightning strikes.

"Hold that light steadily, so I can see the floor," rang Nelson's heavy voice, as, shifting the woman to his left shoulder, he sent his right hand to his hip pocket.

Reggy, though shaking as if with the palsy of the aged, managed to direct the rays of the dark lantern upon the floor.

Nelson's revolver sounded sharply, and, though the reptile nearest him still continued to writhe, its head was off.

Three more shots jarred out, and the last of the cobras in the hallway was past the possibility of doing further mischief.

"There were six, there must be two more upstairs," said Nelson, turning to the tramp. "Will you go, or shall I?"

"I'll go," said Reggy huskily, though with what was, under the circumstances, positive bravery.

Up the steps he went as though pursued by a legion of devils. It was not long before two shots sounded overhead. Then the tramp, still holding the lantern, reeled into sight at the head of the stairs.

"Well," sounded Nelson's voice, with the calm of desperation in it, "we're waiting for you."

Down came the tramp, with rapid though faltering steps. He did not stop until he landed against the door.

"Open," commanded the leader, and, dizzy with dread, the trio issued from the house.

"Where now?" shakingly demanded Dawson, as he pulled the door to after him and joined his companions down in the graveled walk.

"Over to the grove'll do as well as anywhere, I guess," replied King Nelson, nodding his head toward the trees.

Over there they went, reeling with the nausea of the terrible waking nightmare through which they had passed.

Once under the trees, the detective laid his human burden gently upon the ground.

"You've been in India?" he now swiftly interrogated, turning upon Reggy.

"Yes."

"Know all about the cobra's bite?"

"Yes."

"What——"

"It's sure death."

"What's the antidote?"

"There isn't any that works often."

"Once in a while, though, a life is saved?"

"Yes."

"By what means? Speak up, man! Don't waste the whole night!"

"It isn't any good to hurry, and we can't get the antidote—in time to do us any good," said Reggy mournfully.

"Roll up your trousers, Dawson. Show me the flesh where you've been bitten," ordered King Nelson, turning upon his operative, over whom the torpor of utter despair seemed to have settled.

Like one in a trance, he obeyed. Nelson had produced his sharp knife. By the light of the lantern, he saw the small punctures where the reptile's fangs had sunk in.

"Grit your teeth, man," ordered the detective.

"All right," was the half-sullen answer.

"Get a good grip on yourself. I'm going to hurt."

"Don't care if you do," was the dogged answer.

Cleave! went the bright blade. King Nelson swiftly cut away the flesh around the bite. In a twinkling he had cut out another tiny section of bleeding flesh. A third, and all was done.

Reggy, after looking on for an instant, had begun to roll up one leg of his own trousers. King Nelson came over to him, looked at the little wound, and made a much deeper one with his knife.

This done, he commanded:

"Light a twig fire, Broke, and quick about it."

Seating himself, the detective cut away the flesh where he himself had been struck by the venomous thing.

That task performed, he stuck the knife blade into the twig fire, which was now crackling merrily.

"What's the antidote for this sort of thing in India?" briskly demanded the detective, turning upon the tramp.

"Cutting out and cauterizing."

"What next?"

"Make the victim drink three or four quarts of strong black coffee without sugar."

"What next?"

"Keep the poor devil walking all the time, so he can't go to sleep. If he does, he's a sure goner," replied Reggy, speaking now as unconcernedly as if he were discussing some one else's fate.

"Anything else?"

"Two or three minutes after the coffee's down, begin with the brandy," resumed the tramp. "Keep on giving him big drinks of the liquor every minute or two. It won't hurt him. If it gets him drunk, thank Heaven for it, for when he feels the brandy going to his head, he's soon saved. But it ain't much use to talk about it. We can't get the coffee or the brandy here—and in a few minutes we'll all be stone-dead."

"How often does that treatment save the victim?"

"About one case in two hundred, maybe," was the tramp's apathetic reply.

King Nelson withdrew his knife from the fire. Finding the steel at a red heat, he swiftly applied it to the three wounds on Dawson's leg, stanching the blood of each cut successively. A moment later, he was cauterizing Reggy's wound, reserving treatment of his own until the last.

"Now, get up and begin to walk—both of you," ordered King Nelson, so peremptorily that neither of his hearers thought of questioning.

"If either of you begins to feel the least bit sleepy, call and let me know," was Nelson's next order, as, choosing a circular path under the trees, he began to tramp for his life.

Round and round they went, the other two following in the tracks of King Nelson, who occasionally changed the route that their exertions might not make them dizzy.

"How long did you say it took for a cobra's bite to kill?" finally asked Nelson, pausing and looking at his companions, who halted likewise.

"About twenty minutes," responded Reggy.

"We've lived about that long already, I should say."

"And may live a little longer," answered the tramp, with dull composure.

"I don't feel anything, except the pain where I was cut and burned."

"Don't let that worry you. When the last comes, it'll come so quickly that you'll hardly have time to realize it," predicted the tramp.

"Do you feel anything, Dawson?" queried the detective, eying his operative.

"A numbness."

"Where?"

"All over me."

"Fright, or venom?"

"I don't know. A little of both, I guess," was the answer, given with a faint smile.

"Keep on walking. We'll fight it off like men, as long as we can," was the mandate of King Nelson, that set all three in motion once more at the best gait that they could keep up.

Meanwhile, the woman lay on the ground motionless, helpless, and, judging from the expression of her face, indifferent.

As often as he caught sight of her the detective groaned.

"Poor creature!" he thought. "If we succumb, she is likely to again fall into the hands of those scoundrels. I do not seem fated to save her. As often as I have thought to, something has happened that has put her safety out of my hands. Shall I set her free, that, in case of our death, she may have a chance to get to a place of safety? Yes, it will be better. Weak as her brain now is, there is a chance that the instinct of self-preservation is yet left to her."

Obeying this latest impulse, King Nelson paused to bend over her and remove the gag.

Save to gasp in the fresh air, the woman made no sign. Her eyes rested on the detective's face, though without expression.

"Let me get those handcuffs off," said Nelson gently.

Not a move did the woman make. Though she must have heard, she gave no sign of it.

"Can she have been bitten, too?" wondered the detective, with a sudden thrill of alarm. "No, no, that can't be, for I held her too high up for those loathsome crawling things to have any chance to strike at her. All that can ail her is that her mind is in a torpor. God grant that she may come out of it in time to escape the wretches who have already done so much to destroy her mind and body."

"I'm getting about tired of walking," announced Reggy, after a few minutes more of unremitting exercise.

"Becoming drowsy?" cried Nelson, in alarm.

"No, it ain't that," responded the tramp, leaning up against a tree. "I'm as wide awake as ever, but I've been a lazy fellow for so many years, that it comes mighty hard to turn industrious all at once."

"That numbness has gone," said Dawson, halting beside the pair. "It's odd, in view of what our friend has told us, how long it takes for the venom to work."

"Do you know, I believe," cried King Nelson, a sudden gleam of joy shooting into his eyes, "that we're not going to die, after all."

"Don't waste precious time thinking that," urged Reggy nonchalantly.

"But I don't feel the least effect from that bite, and it must be an hour now since I got it. See here, men, I believe we've been saved by a mighty lucky chance."

"What chance?" sneered Reggy.

"You remember the meat that was suspended over each snake's head in that room upstairs? I begin to believe that they struck at it so often that they must have lost their venom—exhausted it. Then they got free. How, except by striking at the cords that bound them? Men, I don't believe there was a trace of venom left on their fangs by the time they got at us. If there was any left, it was so weakened that the bleeding, cauterizing, and constant walking have saved us."

"Hurrah!" cried Dawson, becoming suddenly blithe.

"I can't quite believe it," muttered Reggy incredulously.

"Believe it or not, as you please," retorted the detective, with increasing vigor of manner. "From this instant I'm going to proceed on the belief that I'm destined to live. I won't believe anything else until I'm dead!"

Bending over the woman, he lifted her to her feet.

"Where?" What now?" interrogated Dawson.

"I'm going to start at once to bag the ringleaders of this series of infamous crimes?" was the resolute answer.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE TABLES TURNED.

"But who are they?" asked the perplexed Dawson.

"Time will show," rejoined King Nelson, noncommittally.

Then passing one arm around the woman, he added:

"Try to walk, my friend, but if you can't we will carry you. Now to the road."

They reached it, turned toward the east, and kept on for half an hour. At the end of that time they came to a fork in the road.

From there they could make out the outlines of farm buildings at a point up on a hillside to the northward.

"Get into the bushes, out of sight," commanded Nelson. "Wait until I come back for you."

He went off in the direction of the farm. Twenty minutes later he drove back, mounted on the seat of a farm wagon.

"I had some difficulty hiring this rig, even if it isn't stylish," he chuckled, as he drew rein, and the three came out from the bushes toward him. "That farmer wasn't stuck on the idea of letting his rig to a stranger. Jump in. I know where to find the man that I want next."

Dawson sprang up on the seat beside his chief. Reggy boosted the woman into the box of the wagon, taking a seat beside her on the floor.

Without another word, the detective started the horse. He was extremely uncommunicative during the ride, a fact which his two companions soon discerned, and they ceased to question him.

It was fully twenty minutes later when King Nelson drove into the yard of another farmhouse. There was not a sign of a light in any of the windows, but a couple of dogs came out to meet the visitors with vociferous and menacing greeting.

But King Nelson, handing the reins to Dawson, sprang to the ground, spoke to the dogs, and then boldly went up to the door, where he gave the bell a mighty pull.

In a few moments one of the windows above was abruptly opened.

"Well," demanded a gruff voice, as a night-capped head was thrust out of the window, "who are you, and what do you want?"

"I'm looking for Constable Watson."

"That's me."

"I want to see you on important legal business."

There was a grunt, the window closed, and, after a few moments more of waiting, the front door opened, revealing Constable Watson in shirt, trousers, and anything but an amiable smile.

"What's wanted?" demanded Mr. Watson.

"Your help, and that of a small posse of men."

"I don't know you."

"Of course you don't, but——"

King Nelson whispered something in the Jersey constable's ear. In an instant that officer's mood changed.

"Shoo!" he ejaculated. "You don't say so?"

King Nelson nodded, following this up by demanding:

"What's the prospect of getting together a posse of about four other men, all brave and close-mouthed, if they are well paid?"

"Guess I can raise 'em, if you can wait an hour or two," assented Mr. Watson. "But come in."

With a wave of the hand to Dawson, the detective went inside, and the door closed. Soon after a light showed at the parlor windows. The conversation lasted at least a quarter of an hour. At the end of it, King Nelson appeared again at the door, saying:

"Dawson, bring the woman in here. I'm going to have you stay here with her for the present, to see that she doesn't get away, and that no harm comes to her. Broke, you come in, too, until we are ready to start—that is, after hitching the horse."

A moment later Watson's twenty-year-old son hastened to the barn, saddling a horse and galloping away.

King Nelson, now certain that his theory about the venom of the cobras being exhausted was a correct one, disposed of himself upon the sofa for a short nap. Broke, seeing his new chief's example, went fast asleep in a chair.

"Bring the poor creetur upstairs," suggested Constable Watson, after a short but curious look at the demented woman. "There's a spare bedroom next to my wife's room. She'll come in and put the poor creetur to bed, and give you any other help you may want, since your chief says I'm to be pretty well paid for my work."

This suggestion was carried out.

Nelson and the ex-tramp slept for more than an hour before Constable Watson intruded upon their slumber to introduce the four men whom he had secured for the enterprise in hand.

Nelson looked them over critically, yet with such ease that none of the men felt aware of uncomfortable scrutiny. They were quiet, determined-looking men, not one of them less than forty years of age, strongly built farmers, whom he decided were lacking in neither grit nor intelligence.

"You are to assist the constable and myself to make a few arrests, in case any such arrests are necessary."

"Any fighting to do?"

"Very likely, though I shall try to so arrange matters that we shall trap our game by surprise tactics. If you are prompt and fearless, I don't believe the other side will have much chance to do any fighting. You are to be paid five dollars each for the day's work, and five dollars more for your silence, unless it becomes necessary to talk."

The four men glanced from one to the other.

"It's all right," broke in Constable Watson, with the air of a man accustomed to settling such mooted points. "It's all clear, straightforward work, in aid of the law. I know all about the gentleman you're to work for, even if you don't."

That guarantee disposed of the last doubt. The four men signified their willingness to embark in the work proposed for them. As each was armed, King Nelson led the way to the door without further parley. Though the accommodations were a trifle crowded, all got into the wagon. There were seven of them, exclusive of Watson's son, who was to take no share in the real work of the party.

Gathering up the reins, King Nelson started the horse back over the road by which they had come.

In considerably less than an hour he drew rein at a point a quarter of a mile away from the lonely villa.

Watson's son now took the reins, and, after all the rest had got out of the wagon, the young man turned the horse about, to take the rig back to its owner.

"We'll go through the woods," said Nelson. "Be careful not to make any unnecessary noise. Better follow me in single file."

In this manner they reached the grove. From there they approached the house.

Watson and his party spread around the building, keenly alert in the darkness, while Nelson and Reggy went to the front door, and, with the lantern on, stepped inside.

In a few minutes, Nelson came out again. A low hiss was sufficient to rally his little force around him.

"No one inside," he whispered. "All we've got to do is to go inside and wait."

One of the men he posted at the back door, another at the front; two more were concealed behind empty boxes and barrels in the cellar, opposite the door to the secret passage.

With Constable Watson and Reggy, King Nelson took up his own post in the empty parlor, ready to respond to warning or call from either of the watchers.

All was in darkness until daylight came filtering through the blinds of the house.

About this time the watchers began to munch at the food which they had brought along in their pockets.

It was understood that it might prove a long watch, very likely a vain one, so no one thought of being impatient.

It was ten o'clock, in fact, before King Nelson, posted behind one of the drawn blinds at the front of the house, saw a sight that made him start with satisfaction.

Out in the road were The Trompett and Ike Crawford. They turned in at the gate, after stealthy looks about them to make sure that there were no observers in sight, and came quickly down the driveway to the front door.

By this time Nelson had succeeded in withdrawing his watcher from the back door. In the parlor, five determined men awaited the incoming of the rascally pair.

A key turned in the door. Ike stepped in first, followed by The Trompett.

"Old girl," began the strangler, "I guess we're in time to——"

His words died out in a startled yell.

For the parlor door flew suddenly open, and before the astonished vision of the pair appeared King Nelson.

Dashing past them, the detective gained the door, closed it, and stood with his back against it.

Just ahead of them were four other men, including the nonchalant Reggy.

"Fight, old girl!" roared Ike, on the instant, his face becoming livid with fury and defiance. "Kick—bite—claw—kill, if you can!"

Ike's own right hand went inside his vest like a flash. It came out with a bit of steel flashing there. With the same movement he tried to bury the blade in Watson's stomach.

But Reggy, with a movement that seemed almost indolent, struck up his wrist, seized it, and, in a twinkling, had the knife away. With a fearful blow, the ex-tramp stretched Ike half senseless at his feet.

No need was there to urge The Trompett to fight. Looking like a veritable fury, she sprang upon Watson, intent on scratching his eyes out.

But the constable believed not in wasting chivalry on a female of The Trompett's class. With a quick swing, he brought his short club across the top of the woman's head, at the same moment that King Nelson seized her in an enveloping embrace from behind.

It was only a moment later that handcuffs clicked upon the wrists of both malefactors.

"You?" gasped Ike, staring in real terror at Nelson and Reggy.

"Yes," said the detective grimly. "I suppose you figured that we were at the bottom of the Hudson by this time. But you are fortunate if attempted murder is the only crime charged against you. From now on, you are never likely to know another moment of freedom. Ike Crawford, your future belongs to the State."

"You talk big," jeered Ike, recovering his bravado.

"Bring them both into the parlor," ordered King Nelson.

When this order had been obeyed, and the pair lay upon their backs on the floor, King Nelson began sternly:

"There is only one hope for either of you, and I can't promise much in that line, either. But what hope either one of you can have, lies in telling me the whole truth, and as quickly as you can."

"What do you want to know?" demanded Ike hoarsely.

"All that you can tell me about your employers in this nefarious work."

"I'll die before I'll breathe a word!" roared Ike.

"Me too!" screamed The Trompett.

"Oh, well, do just as you please," retorted King Nelson, without an accent of dissappointment. "The law prevents me from resorting to torture, as you did, but your silence won't shield any one."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A SORT OF A KING.

"You're going to do mighty big things, ain't you?" sneered Ike.

"Not with you," was the cold answer. "I've changed my mind. I've no questions to ask. I know just where to get the people I'm after, and they can do all their own talking."

"Oh, yes," was the incredulous answer.

"You don't need to do any more talking, unless it relieves your mind to be noisy," retorted King Nelson, moving away.

"Say——"

"If you don't shut up, I'll order you both gagged. On second thought, men," turning to his helpers, "I guess you'd better do it for both of them."

Ike's chagrin when he found the order being promptly carried out was deep and complete. He tried to keep the wedge out of his mouth until he could say more, but his design was frustrated, and he was quickly gagged.

The Trompett took her taste of that discipline more philosophically. Only in her flashing eyes did there linger a hint of the things she would do if she ever found a chance.

These two prisoners secured, and their silence assured, King Nelson again posted his watchers at the front and back doors, and the tedium of dull waiting was resumed.

At noon another cold meal was eaten, the prisoners being ungagged one at a time and permitted to eat.

After that, the afternoon wore away. There was no sign of any one else coming to visit the house.

At five o'clock both prisoners were ungagged and fed. It was while this was going on that King Nelson decided upon returning to New York.

"I shall leave you here, Mr. Watson, with your own men. You will seize any one who comes to the house, and hold him until I have had a chance to look the prisoner over. My man (Reggy) and I will take these two prisoners with us to New York."

"Will you?" snapped Ike, looking up and ceasing his munching. "That is where you'll get into trouble if you try it. You haven't any requisition papers, have you?"

"No," admitted King Nelson.

"Then I guess you'll have to wait until you get 'em, unless you want to lay yourself and your friends open to the charge of abduction."

"That's the talk," approved The Trompett, wagging her head.

King Nelson did not permit himself to show how much annoyance this proposition gave him. To wait for requisition papers would make the matter a public one. It would be sure to get into the papers, and the employers of this evil pair would then have a chance to take warning and get out of the way.

"Sho!" grinned Constable Watson. "I've had this kind of people to deal with before. All we've got to do is to take these people before Squire Chase and charge 'em with being suspicious characters. He'll order 'em taken out of town, and I'll take 'em to the New York ferry. You can stand by 'em and prevent 'em from jumping overboard, sir. Once you are in midstream, I miss my guess if you couldn't arrest 'em as a New York officer. That's the way I've know it to be done before in cases just like this."

While this plan was being recited, Ike's jaw fell considerably. He looked at King Nelson with a sickly smile, saying slowly:

"That being the case, I don't know as it's worth my while giving you any trouble."

"No," retorted the detective decisively, "it isn't. You will go of your own free will, then?"

"S'pose I might as well. You'll find some way of making it hot for me if I don't."

"Send one of your men, Watson, to get some proper sort of conveyance for us."

Lest the prisoners should change their minds, they were quickly gagged again.

"You're getting more sensible, the whiter you grow," said Nelson ironically, as he looked down at the once more prostrate Ike.

The black was, in truth, fading from Crawford's face. By the time that another twenty-four hours had passed, the last of it was sure to disappear, and he would be as white of feature as ever.

Just after dark, the covered wagon that had been sent for arrived. In the bottom of this, Ike and The Trompett were laid, and so secured that they could not give trouble on the way. A few horse blankets were thrown over them, to screen them from the gaze of the curious. Reggy rode with them, where he could watch them, while King Nelson climbed up to the seat and started the horses.

One of Watson's men departed on foot to carry a cipher note to Dawson, while the rest of the little Jersey force remained in the house, ready for whatever should turn up.

After driving some miles, King Nelson reached the nearest ferry. Wagon and all were borne over the river to New York. King Nelson drove to a little hotel not far from West Street, where he was known, feared and obeyed. Ike and The Trompett were taken to a secluded room, where Reggy was mounted as guard over them, with the strictest injunctions not to fall asleep while on duty, while the landlord agreed to drop in every fifteen minutes up to midnight, to make sure that all was going right.

For a few moments, the great detective debated with himself whether it was wise to trust two such important prisoners to a man whom he had known for so little a time as his acquaintance with Reggy extended over.

But this inward debate was of a short duration.

"Of course, the fellow's trustworthy," muttered Nelson. "Twice he has risked death in my service. He is cool and devoted. It would be folly not to trust such a splendid fellow."

His mind made up on that point, Nelson next arranged for the return of the wagon to its Jersey owner.

This attended to, his next move was to go to a room where, all alone, he attended to some necessary changes in his toilet. Recourse to mine host's wardrobe was necessary to this end, for the detective's late rough experiences had reduced him to an appearance little better than Reggy's.

The toilet at last made to his satisfaction, the detective, after a last critical look at his revolver, went out in haste, going to the nearest elevated railway station, and there boarding the first train uptown.

At One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street he changed to the road that runs up through Westchester County, leaving the train at the pretty little town of Mount Vernon.

Alighting at the station, he left it and sruck off along one of the roads back of the depot without the least hesitation. He knew exactly whom he wanted to see, and where that individual was to be found, if at home, for Nelson was now going boldly in search of The Trompett's former, and presumably present, employer.

This individual was none other than the courtly Vance Malloy, one of the cleverest rogues of this or any other day. Vance had once been known as the king of the green-goods men. He had operated largely all over the country, luring to New York countrymen who were anxious to buy counterfeit money that looked as good as the genuine. Needless to say, Vance and his satellites had never dealt in counterfeit money. Once they lured the avaricious dupe into their den, they showed him, in genuine money, the amount he was anxious to purchase. The dupe departed, thinking he had in the satchel which he carried so jealously the supposed amount in "green goods." Upon his arrival home, the dupe invariably found the satchel to contain merely a brick reposing on a bed of sawdust. At this game, in years past, Vance Malloy was reputed to have amassed a fortune of more than half a million. A few years before the opening of this story, however, Vance had been driven out of his peculiar vocation by the increasing annoyance that he met at the hands of secret-service men. At present he was not positively known to be engaged in any "crooked" business, though the detectives who knew him were not altogether assured that he was even now leading an honest life.

But his house in Mount Vernon was well known to all of the fraternity who hunt down crime and criminals in New York. It was a large and handsome villa, in the middle of a plot of ground measuring more than five acres. Here Malloy sometimes sumptuously entertained people who did not know, or who chose to ignore, his peculiar and adventurous past.

Nelson, who did not now in the least resemble the man who had met with such startling adventures in the lonely villa over in New Jersey, turned briskly down the driveway that led to the door of Malloy's handsome residence.

His ring at the door was answered by a coarse-featured woman of middle age, plainly a servant. Of her he asked:

"Is Mr. Malloy at home?"

"I don't know. Who shall I say wishes to see him?"

"Simply say that I am one who has much of importance to communicate to him."

"Come in. Step in there," said the woman, leading him into the hallway, and pointing to an open door.

King Nelson stepped into the room indicated, finding himself in the late "king's" library. It was a handsome, tastefully furnished room, though not overfilled with bookcases. In one corner stood a locked cabinet which suggested, somehow, that it might be a sideboard in disguise.

Left alone, King Nelson reached furtively to make sure that his revolver was where he could reach it handily at need. He remained standing until a step outside heralded the incoming of the one-time "green-goods" king.

Vance Malloy was a man well along in his fifties, stout, tall, well developed, and slightly bald. His face was jolly, rubicund, without a trace of guile in it. He was attired in evening clothes. Though his eyes shone keenly, he was Chesterfieldian in his manner as he bowed and inquired who his caller was, and the nature of his business.

"But I am sure that you will talk more at your ease if seated," added the ex-king of "green-goods" men, at the same time indicating the nearest chair at one side of the library table.

As King Nelson accepted the seat with murmured thanks, Mr. Malloy passed around the table to a chair on the other side.

"Now, pray proceed with your business, if you are ready," begged the courteous one, when both were seated.

"You are, if I am not mistaken," went on King Nelson, speaking in a tone that implied only the most ordinary kind of business, "the owner of a villa in ——, New Jersey."

"Yes," replied Malloy, without a sign of surprise.

That there might be no chance for a mistake, King Nelson went on to describe the house with some particularity.

"Yes, that is my house," admitted Vance, without the slightest sign of embarrassment or suspicion.

"Then," rejoined Nelson steadily, without changing his tone, and while the two men continued to look at each other with eyes in which appeared no sign of hostility, "I must ask you to accompany me to New York on a little matter of business connected with that house."

"Oh!" ejaculated Vance, opening his eyes a little wider, yet giving no betraying start. "Am I to infer from your tone, or, rather, your words, that you are a detective?"

"That is the truth," assented King Nelson, still looking steadily at his man.

"I can't go to-night——"

"You must!"

"I beg you to be a little considerate of——"

Vance Malloy went no further, but a malicious smile came swiftly into the face that had, a moment before, been calculated to disarm all suspicion.

King Nelson, muttering an inarticulate cry of amazement, tried to rise. He could not. His body tingled, thrilled, vibrated from top to toe. He was utterly helpless, possessing not the strength to leave the chair.

"You feel a little weak," smiled Vance Malloy, not raising his voice.

At the same moment he employed his left hand to throw aside the scarf that had lain over the table.

This move revealed the index finger of his right hand resting upon a button on the top of the table. An inch away lay another button.

"Electricity, you see," smiled the "ex-green-goods" king. "By pressing upon this button, I cause such a current to pass through your body that, strong as you are, you are unable to move a finger. But if I were to touch this button——"

As he paused, with his gaze riveted on King Nelson's face, he slowly moved his left hand toward the second button.

"If I were to touch this one," he resumed, "it would cause a voltage of sufficient strength to pass through your body to insure your instant death!"

King Nelson, powerless as he was at this moment, could not doubt. He knew that the other spoke the truth.

Vance Malloy's voice sounded as if it came to him from far away, as that rascal mockingly inquired:

"What are you going to do—now?"

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE DEATH TRAP.

By GUY DECKER.

Mr. Warren, the mate of the whale ship *Roberts*, was loved and respected by every man in the vessel, with the exception of Harry Thompson—a tall, dark-browned youth, of an evil, quarrelsome disposition. Thompson had taken a dislike to the mate from the moment he discovered that the latter was a man calculated to win the esteem of his crew. He—Thompson—had hoped to excite the men to mutiny; but when he perceived how kindly they were treated by the first officer, he knew that to accomplish his purpose he must first remove Warren from his path. Night and day, therefore, he watched for an opportunity to take the life of the mate—to strike the murderous blow in such a way as to avoid detection.

Days, weeks, and months glided on; the ship rounded the stormy Cape Horn, bowling along toward the sperm-whale ground on the Gallipagos, and still the dark-browed villain waited for a chance to accomplish his fiendish work.

One evening, just after sundown, while the hands were eating their supper, the well-known cry of "There she blows!" came down from the masthead, causing every man to spring to his feet.

Whales were discovered about a league off the lee bow, and the captain having ordered the main yard to be hauled aback, darted aloft with his glass slung over his shoulder.

Soon after he was heard ordering his mates to lower away their boats.

With a glad shout the men sprang to the davits, the ropes slid through the tackle blocks, and the boats dropping into the water, were soon manned.

"Give way, lads!" cried the mate, seizing his steering oar. "Give way with a will!"

"Aye, aye," responded his crew, and the voice of Thompson, who pulled the bow oar, was the loudest.

A strange light shone in his evil eyes; his teeth were compressed; he seemed to think the moment for which he had waited so long was at hand.

The four boats glided swiftly over the long, heavy swells, so common in the Pacific, the mate taking the lead, and in a short time the spouting of a whale was heard a few fathoms ahead.

"Your paddles, men—your paddles!" gritted the first officer through his clenched teeth. "Stand up, Hal!"

Hal was the boat steerer, or harpooner. He sprang lightly to his feet, his iron ready in his hand.

But just as the mate was on the point of shouting the familiar order, "Give it to him!" the monster of the deep turned flukes and disappeared.

Warren fairly turned pale with disappointment.

"It's too bad," he sighed. "The twilight is closing around us now, and it'll soon be too dark to see the whale, even if he comes up."

"I think you're mistaken, sir," said the harpooner. "Yonder," pointing to the east, "is the top of the moon's disk, just lifting above the sea. We'll have light enough, I reckon, to see that humpbacked chap when he comes up again."

"Aye, aye, you are right, Hal," answered the mate, rubbing his hands. "I never before whaled it by moonlight, but we'll have a chance to do so now, for I'll keep on that fellow's track until we get a chance to plant an iron in his hump, if it takes me all night. This is our first lowering since we sailed, and blow me if I don't mean that it shall be a lucky one. Pull ahead!"

The crew obeyed, and in the course of half an hour the spout of the whale was seen rising like a jet of liquid silver about a quarter of a mile ahead of the boat. The moon had by this time risen high above the horizon, sprinkling water stars all over the surface of the sea.

"Pull ahead—stretch yourselves, my lads!" cried the mate. "We'll soon have an iron in that chap ahead."

The man pulled with a will, and in a short time the boat was within six fathoms of the monster.

"Stand up, Hal!"

And the boat steerer sprang to his feet.

"Give it to him!"

The harpoon clove the air with a rushing sound, and was buried to the socket in the hump. Then came the order to "stern!" and as the whale sounded, the mate and his boat steerer changed places.

The boat was now rushing through the water with the speed of lightning, the spray foaming and boiling around her bows, and her gunwales forward almost on a level with the surface of the water.

With a triumphant flash lighting his snakelike eyes, Thompson stooped sideways from his thwart to unlash one of the lances secured to the side of the boat.

"Quick! Quick, my man! Hurry up with that lance!" exclaimed the mate, stretching out his hand to receive the weapon.

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Thompson, in a hoarse voice; and suddenly rising up, with the deadly steel in his hand, he contrived to stumble in such a manner as would, he hoped, cause the blade of his weapon to pierce the bosom of the mate.

The latter, however, avoided the stroke by stepping nimbly to one side, when, with pretended anxiety, Thompson quickly rose, declaring that he never could have forgiven his awkwardness if the mate had suffered from it.

"Don't mention it," exclaimed Warren. "Accidents will happen sometimes. You were not to blame for stumbling," and he took the lance from the other's hand.

Foiled in this attempt upon the life of the man he hated, Thompson quickly resolved to make another. The slackening of the line soon afforded him the opportunity he craved. While the men were hauling upon the rope, he contrived, unobserved, to twist into several kinks the part which was nearest to the mate, just as the whale came looming up from the ocean within darting distance of the boat.

"Now, then," Thompson mentally exclaimed, "the moment the whale sounds, one of the kinks I have prepared will become entangled about the mate's legs, or his neck, and drag him overboard. There goes the lance," he continued, aloud, as Warren hurled the weapon, with unerring aim, into the monster's body.

Up went the flukes of the whale, and the next moment he disappeared a second time beneath the green chambers of the sea.

Then, as the line ran whipping through the chocks of the boat, the kinks which had been arranged by Thompson to insnare the life of the mate flew upward like writhing serpents, forming a "bight," which, glancing past the first officer as he dodged to avoid it, caught tightly around the neck of the villain who had prepared the infernal trap, and dragged him overboard with the velocity of a cannon ball.

The mate instantly severed the line with a blow of his hatchet; but Thompson was never seen again by the crew of the *Roberts.*

A few days afterward the whale was recaptured, killed, and towed to the ship.

THE HANDS AND FACE IN HOT WEATHER.

After a journey or long walk on a hot day it is most refreshing and beneficial to bathe the hands and face in very warm water, and from the face it will remove the unpleasant redness and heat in a very short time, and impart a cool and delightful sensation. The application of cold water to the face and hands when heated from fatigue or exercise is very injurious to the skin, sometimes producing redness and eruptions.

ORIGIN OF FINGER PRINTS.

The first authentic reference to finger rings occurs in the Old Testament, where Judah's signet ring is mentioned. It is also evident they were in use among the Egyptions at that time, for Pharaoh is said to have taken the ring from his own finger and put it on Joseph's hand when he made him ruler over Egypt. In those days rings seem to have been worn not so much for ornaments as for practical purposes. They were used for sealing. The Romans used to wear signet rings of iron, and every free man had a right to wear one. Ambassadors, in the early days, used to wear gold rings as a part of their official dress. This privilege of wearing rings was afterward extended to chief magistrates and senators. The emperors used to confer this right upon those whom they wished to favor. Nowadays the wearing of rings has no particular significance except the wedding ring and the engagement ring. Anybody who wants to, and who can afford to purchase one, can wear a signet ring. The custom of wearing rings is a very popular one, and the manufacture of them forms one of the most important branches of the jeweler's industry.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Back to Wife from the War.

Captain Albert Wellman, who fought under Osman Pasha in the Turkish-Russian War and was counted among the dead at the Battle of Plevna in 1877, was reunited recently to his wife, who had left their home in Cairo for England and eventually for this country, after receiving the news that her husband had been killed.

Captain Wellman, instead of being dead, was among the prisoners taken by the Russians. When he was finally released from the prison in Russia he could find no trace of his wife and son either in Cairo or in England. After making a long search for them, he came to America and settled in Montreal, where he built up a large furniture-manufacturing business.

He made many efforts during the years he lived there to find his wife. Recently he received word from her relatives that she was living at 87 South Fourth Street, Williamsburg. He made a trip there and found his wife. They are now in Boston with their son.

Afire, She Runs from Mother.

Helen, the 4-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vich, of Fords, N. J., is dead from burns received when she and her two sisters were playing near a bonfire. The girl's mother heard the little girl's cries and ran to help her, but the frightened child ran away from her mother, and it was not until she fell exhausted that her mother could beat out the flames.

Lajoie Guards His Bat.

Napoleon Lajoie, the king of second basemen for many years, and always one of the best batters in the game, is on the warpath. Usually he isn't particular about his bats, but from now on it will be different. The big Frenchman says other players on the Cleveland team have broken $100 worth of bats for him this season.

"It isn't the cost of the bats that hurts me," says Lajoie, "for the club pays for them, anyway. Just about the time I get accustomed to a stick some pitcher comes along, picks it up and steps to the plate. Pitchers don't know how to bat, anyhow, and the first thing one does is to hit the ball with the end of the club. It breaks and they throw it to the ground and think no more about it. I've had fellows break bats for me that I wouldn't have taken $500 for."

Lajoie is guarding his bats now. He attributes his poor hitting this year to the fact that his favorite clubs have been broken.

Girl's Brave Act.

While neighbors shut their eyes that they might not see a baby girl ground to death beneath a railroad engine, at Eugene, Ore., Gladys Wooley, 7 years old, sped 150 feet and lifted the little one from the tracks. The side of the locomotive struck her, tearing her dress, but she escaped injury.

Spectators do not understand how the little figure which ran past them reached the track in time. The baby was Gladys' sister. The shriek of the whistle which started the race between the girl and the engine brought the children's mother and a dozen neighbors to their doors, yet only the child moved. The engineer threw on the emergency brakes and did all possible to stop. The baby was crossing the tracks with a toy wagon when the sound of the whistle startled her and she sat down between the rails, dazed.

Health Parade.

A new idea was staged in Anderson, Ind., when on "Health Day," a parade a mile long went through the streets. There were thirty-two floats, with thousands of marchers, from the city council to the 4,000 school children who shouted death to the fly and the rat.

The meaning of Anderson's "Health Day" is that the city has become interested in preventing disease. Near the head of the parade, on a decorated automobile truck, was a huge figure of a house fly—the disease carrier. "Swat Flies, Save Lives" was the warning on big signs hung below it. Another float bore a huge rat, and the sign: "Kill the Rat; it Carries Diseases."

The big event, part of a crusade against flies, rats, and all harmful things and unhealthful conditions, was the work of the Anderson Council of Women. The entire city joined in the spirit of the day.

Marsans is Second Ty Cobb.

The Cincinnati Reds have two Cubans on the regular line-up who are expected to be stars of the National League during the season. Gonzales and Marsans are the names of the Cubans secured by Frank Bancroft, business manager of the Reds.

"Marsans will prove the Ty Cobb of the Nationals," said Mr. Bancroft. "If it is possible to have another such wonderful player as Cobb is, then Marsans will be the player. He will play the left-field position this season, replacing Bob Bescher, and, mark my word, he'll be nothing short of a sensation.

"And Gonzales, whom I signed on my trip to Cuba last summer, promises to be a second Archer. His throwing to the bases is most accurate, and he throws most accurate, and Gonzales cannot speak a word of English, and Marsans is used as interpreter."

Boy is Snared in Tree Crotch.

While he was in a tree picking blossoms, at Benville, Ark., Tony Camp, a boy, fell. His hand caught in the fork of a branch and he was left suspended. Willie Smith, his companion, spent two hours in piling up brush and logs so that he could reach his companion and lift him until he was able to extricate his hand. Camp's wrist and shoulder were dislocated.

Locks Self to Tree.

After having yelled and raved for hours, John Guydon was released from a tree at Bluefield, W. Va., to which he had locked himself with the intention of committing suicide.

Guydon determined to die, but wished to do it in a unique way. In the mountains a few miles from Big Stone Gap he bought a trace chain, hammer, padlock, and key, and then went to a secluded spot and chained himself to a tree. To the root of the tree he nailed one end of the chain and formed a loop with the other end, which he placed about his neck. After locking the loop he threw away the hammer and key and lay down to die.

Two hours later he decided he wanted to live. He cried for help until his voice grew weak. Two men happened to see him in his frantic efforts to release himself and they broke the padlock.

Churches Tire of Sunday Sneezes.

The official boards of the Lutheran and United Brethren Church, at Hallam, Pa., are investigating the weekly sneezes which seize the congregation. The officers are convinced that some person has been having great sport in watching the effect of snuff and other irritating dusts scattered in the air during the church services.

Sleeps With Mule; Poor Bed.

John Tushick, 74 years old, a farmer, living at Oakville, six miles south of St. Louis, walked from a saloon in that town to the Winheim Brothers stables, near by, and at midnight sought sleep in a stall occupied by a mule. A few hours later John Warnbrodt, a stableman, heard cries for help and found Tushick in the stall, kicked senseless.

The man was bruised about the body and stomach and injured internally. Tushick said he did not notice the mule when he entered the stall. A kick in the stomach awakened him.

Murderer Flees from Jail.

Will Siler, convicted and sentenced to twenty-one years in prison for the murder of his sister-in-law, Mrs. McFadden Siler, formerly of Junction City, Kan., broke jail at Mountain Home, Ark., and escaped to the mountains on a stolen horse, recently. A posse with bloodhounds started in pursuit at once. Siler, with the aid of an iron bar, tore a hole in the iron roof of the jail.

Needs 40,000 Men to Harvest Crop.

With an estimated yield of 132,000,000 bushels, Kansas' wheat crop this year is puzzling the farmers already. Forty thousand men will be needed to harvest it. The free employment bureau expects trouble in finding enough laborers to supply the demand.

Scientists' Views of Recent Quake.

Scientists say the earthquake which destroyed twelve villages on the slopes of Mount Etna, Sicily, killing at least 200 persons, injuring 350 others, and causing a property loss estimated at one billion dollars, was the result of a volcanic movement within the mountain. The fact that the earth vibrations were not recorded on any seismographs is evidence that the disturbance affected only a small area.

The stricken zone extends from Zaffarana, the highest village on Mount Etna, to the sea. It includes Linera, the center of the disturbance; Pisano and Santa Venerian. In Linera alone 110 persons were killed and 300 injured. Throughout the region nothing remains but desolation and ruins. The few homes that failed to crumble when the earth rocked were burned by the fires which followed.

The death list consists principally of women and children. This is accounted for by the fact that the men were in the fields at work when the shock occurred. They rushed to their homes, only to find in many cases that their wives and children were crushed beneath the ruins. Many women went insane when their babes were crushed by the falling walls and roofs.

Catania probably has suffered more than any other city in the world from volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, owing to its proximity to the volcano of Etna, at whose foot it lies. The town itself is built on a bed of lava and most of its streets are paved with the same material. The town has a population of 140,000. Although the country in its vicinity is devastated at irregular intervals, it is thickly populated, for it is fertile and vineyards will grow with little or no care.

In the earthquake and tidal wave of 1908 which visited the region now stricken, official figures gave the number of deaths at 77,283, but it was variously estimated that from 150,000 to 200,000 persons lost their lives, while the damage to public and private property amounted to about one billion dollars. The property loss in the present disaster will reach about the same figures, but the number of lives lost is small in comparison.

Rescue parties, surgeons, Red Cross attendants, soldiers, and priests have worked continuously since the earthquake among the ruined villages on the east slope of Mount Etna. Surgeons performed operations by torchlight in the open. However, it will be weeks before the entire region will be visited.

The work of aiding the injured and homeless is rendered more difficult by the large number of rescuers, who are also in need of nourishment, while the refusal of the peasants to leave the ruins where their people are buried adds immensely to the confusion.

Slight shocks have been felt every day since the big quake.

Battles Wolves With Bare Hands.

Attacked by 360 pounds of wolf divided into twelve parcels, and with only his bare hands for weapons, Albert Moore, a cowboy, fought for his life in a cave he discovered on Tie Creek, near Hulett, Wyo., and which he invaded without a light.

He had gone only a short distance from the entrance when he fell over a litter of twelve wolf pups, the animals averaging thirty pounds, and each being able to put up a healthy scrap.

After ten minutes of fighting, during which Moore was bitten from head to foot and his clothing stripped from his body, he managed to get out of the den.

Making a torch, he returned and found that he had killed all the wolves. He will receive $120 bounty on the lot.

Census of U. S. Birds.

A census of all the birds of the United States is to be taken this summer by the Federal government. In announcing this fact the department of agriculture, which will supervise this work, urges the coöperation of all bird lovers. The primary object of the census is the preservation of this important game.

No attempt will be made to count every bird in the country as that would be impossible. The nests will be counted. It is planned to have Boy Scouts help with the work, and each scout will be asked to report the number of nests in a territory allotted to him. From these figures the department of agriculture expects to be able to make accurate estimates of the bird population. The count was begun about May 30 and the final results should be know some time in July.

The census this year will do little good, but by comparing it with data for ensuing years, the experts will be able to judge whether the Federal game-and-bird laws are doing any good.

Birds Move Nest and Eggs.

Mrs. John W. Carey removed an English sparrow nest from a water spout over the porch of her home, at Sioux City, Iowa, and not wishing to destroy six eggs which were in it, she placed it in a near-by lilac bush. A short time afterward the sparrows began moving the nest back to the spout, bit by bit. Within twenty-four hours the nest and eggs were in their former place. Mrs. Carey is wondering how the parent birds moved the eggs without breaking them.

To Cut Flesh Binding Twins.

Guadalupe and Josefa Hinoposa, 18 months old, joined together somewhat after the manner of the Siamese twins, were taken through St. Louis recently from their home in Mexico on the way to Paris, France, where surgeons will attempt to separate them.

The girls are joined together by three inches of tissue at the breasts so that they always face each other. The girls apparently are healthy. As they lay in their mother's arms at the Union station one ate a cake while the other took a nap.

Duck Waddles on Four Feet.

Benjamin Groff, of Lewistown, Pa., has a duck, 4 weeks old, that waddles around the back yard on four feet. It is healthy and gives promise of growing up and being a great freak.

Plants 30,000 Catalpa Trees.

A grove of 30,000 catalpa trees has just been set out by Harley Allen, of Cottonwood Falls, Kan., on his farm near Plymouth.

The trees are planted about 1,300 to the acre, and will be raised for fence posts and telegraph poles, for which they are in great demand. From ten to fifteen years are required for them to make a growth of ample size for this purpose, when they will bring a return of several hundred dollars an acre. Once cut, the grove will spring up again in a short period.

Mr. Allen put in twenty-five acres, and a number of other farmers of this county have planted smaller groves.

Streets of Town Paved With Gold.

Business streets of Victor, Col., are now literally paved with gold. They have been surfaced with more than 700 loads of ore, crushed to a suitable size, which runs as high as $10 a ton in gold. The ore was used because it was really cheaper than it would have been to haul nonmineral rock from a greater distance.

Can of Paint Kills Cattle.

A can of white lead, valued at about 10 cents, cost Rudolph Fiege, of Granfield Township, near New Rockford, N. D., $800. Eight pure-bred cattle licked the soft paint and died as a result.

Fiege, after working about the water trough with the paint, using it to fill leaks, left the can in the trough, where the cattle found it. One after another took sick and eight were dead before the trouble was discovered.

Saves Mail Carrier's Coat.

Sol Levine, of Holdredge, Neb., has applied for a patent on a shoulder protector for mail carriers. The device is intended to prevent the strap of the heavy mail sack from wearing out the mail man's coat, and it has been tested and pronounced "all right" by the postmaster and carriers of the Holdredge office. Coats have been given an extra patch and a hook attachment, but these quickly wear out. Levine's device is made of metal covered with cloth and is detachable from the coat, being easily folded and put in the pocket when not in use.

Colt is Without Forelegs.

A colt, 41 inches high, normal throughout, except that it had no forelegs, was born on the farm of W. B. Bynun, two miles east of Potosi, Texas. The hide over the breast where the legs should have been was in perfect order and the hair was as smooth and pretty there as on any part of the body.

Gates Control Big Iowa Lake.

Extending from Keokuk, Iowa, to above Burlington, in the Mississippi River, is a lake of 100 square miles area, which science keeps at the same level regardless of the fluctuation of the mighty river. Whether the Mississippi is down to very low water, or up to flood stage and reaching for the tops of the levees below Keokuk, the surface of the lake above the Keokuk dam remains where it is desired. This is accomplished by opening and closing a variable number of the 119 gates in the dam, stretching across the Mississippi for nine-tenths of a mile.

A large part of the engineering in the Mississippi at Keokuk was not required for the developing of the water power there, but was compelled by the government for the good of navigation in the river.

Trunk Falls on Him; Foils Young Elopers.

An elopement that failed was exposed when pretty little Miss Julie Matchek, kiss wrapper in a candy factory, appeared at the courthouse, at Cleveland, Ohio, and asked if a marriage license taken out now would hold good until some time in July. By this time, she thought, the young man would be able to stand up for the ceremony and look at least conventionally cheerful.

"You see, Steve Drury and I were going to be married," said Miss Matchek, "and he's so unhappy because he is laid up with a sprained arm and a broken head, that I thought if I got the license and showed it to him it would cheer him up."

The other night Julie and Steve were to elope. There was no particular need to elope, but the bride had never eloped before and was afraid she would never have another chance. Steve had gotten a ladder and had come to the side of the house at 11 p. m., just as they do in the movies. Julie was waiting at the window with her things packed.

"Let it come," whispered Steve.

He caught the bag, all right, and everything would have gone well had not the family dog appeared on the scene.

"Woof! Woof!" said the dog.

Steve's attention was directed, and he did not hear Julie say she was dropping the rest of the baggage. The rest of the baggage was heavy. It was the trunk.

"Poor Steve is in no shape to be married now," said little Miss Julie Matchek, as she walked away with the license.

Will Forgive "Black-hander."

Syd L. Dodds, a planter, who lives near Hickman, Ky., is ready to forgive the writer of a "Black Hand" letter who tried to extort $3,000 from him by threatening to kill him and his family. For three years Dodds has had detectives working on the case, but says he is willing to drop it now. He reached this decision when he received a letter recently from the person who had written the Black Hand note, asking forgiveness.

Dodds says he will drop the case if the Black-hander calls on him accompanied by a minister or some reputable citizen.

Parachute for Aeroplanes.

A new parachute for aëroplanes is designed on lines quite different from those which have been heretofore offered. The parachute surface is operated in connection with the wings of the aëroplane. According to this scheme a large surface of cloth is rolled up and attached to the wings, this being released by a lever so as to spread out and allow the flyer to descend to the ground slowly.

An English aviator has equipped his machine with an acetylene torch, which will burst into flame and form a signal should he fall into the sea.

Big Spring Does Work for Farmer.

Power supplied by a large spring serves many purposes on the farm of C. J. Haas, near Lyondale, Kan. This spring comes rushing out of a big hill, the stream of water being about the size of a small barrel. From the spring the water is carried down a flume to a power house, where it turns a large power wheel which furnishes the motive power for a corn sheller, feed grinder, and washing machine, and also operates a small electric plant which furnishes light for the house and barn.

Many Horses Killed in War.

Chihuahua, Mexico, the state of big ranches, where the horse was supreme and where no one walked a distance of more than a few hundred yards, virtually has been stripped of its equines.

It is estimated that three hundred thousand horses have been killed in the internal troubles which have shaken northern Mexico in the last four years.

General Villa has fifteen thousand horses with his army, and eagerly would seek the chance to double that number.

Leaky Boat Costs Two Lives.

When a boat in which seven boys were crossing the Tar River, at Greenville, N. C., sprang a leak and sank, Edward Ficklen, 12 years old, and Brodie Sicks, 11, were drowned. Two other boys had narrow escapes trying to save those drowning.

Uses Honor System in Managing His Players.

Branch Rickey, the manager of the St. Louis Americans, has the reputation of being very strict with his players. Probably he acquired the name of being a "crank" because he refuses to manage his team on Sundays and because he walks on Sundays and because he walks the "straight and narrow" so carefully himself.

However, Rickey has fewer rules than any other manager. He doesn't even have a time when his players must be in bed. Rickey believes in the honor system with his men and he trusts them to take care of themselves. His only rule is that the players get up a 7:45 o'clock every morning.

"I want them all wide awake when they come into the dining room," says Rickey. "I can tell then whether any of them have violated baseball's unwritten law against boozing. Drink and baseball don't mix."

Launch Capsizes; Five Drown.

Five members of a pleasure party consisting of nine persons were drowned when the launch in which they were riding capsized in the Mississippi River, at Minneapolis, Minn.

The dead are: Mrs. Otto Justmann and her two children and two children of John C. Buckholz.

Play Ball Games in Calgary After Supper.

Baseball in western Canada is more of a municipal affair than anywhere in the United States. The city of Calgary has donated a plot of land in Victoria Park for use as a baseball field. The ball club is run by the leading business men of the town, who show a spirit that puts to shame that of many of the baseball magnates across the border.

The Western Canada Baseball League has a class C rating in organized baseball, but is allowed a class B salary limit—$1,800 a month for fourteen men.

It is a novelty to hear the natives speak of the ball game "this evening." But evening it is, for the games are not called until after 5 o'clock. Take Calgary, for instance. On opening day, the game was started at 4:30 p. m. Every day since then 5:45 is official "play-ball" time, and as it is still early in the season the ball games are not so snappy and full of life as later. It is often 8 o'clock when the last batter is called out. During June, July, and August the games are started at 6:30 p. m., and it is possible to finish extra-inning games, as it remains light enough to play up to 10 o'clock. But the umpire is sometimes put in sore straits when to call a game on account of darkness.

Are You Going to Live 100 Years?

"Fifty years ago the average length of human life was thirty-five years. Fifty years from now, or sooner, the average will be 100 years. I feel safe in saying that children born in 1950 will have an average length of life of 100 years."

So Doctor E. S. Bailey declared before a gathering of noted physicians at Chicago. Not all doctors think that the child of the future will be a veritable Methuselah, but they agree with Doctor Bailey in the statement that much has been done in recent years to increase the length of life. Eminent medical authorities say that the human being of to-day has five times the chances for life that he had a half century ago.

Medical science has kept pace with the most advanced sciences of the world. The engineering work in the building of the Panama Canal would not have been possible without the advance in preventive medicine. A great triumph was scored in the conquering of yellow fever and malaria in Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines. Modern discoveries have enabled much to be done toward eliminating the fatalities due to all diseases. Physical weaklings are made into normal people. Even the death toll of warfare has been lessened.

"We have more people of 100 years of age than we had twenty-five years ago," said one of the experts who heard Doctor Bailey state his theory. "But making life longer is a matter chiefly for the individual. Proper care and moderate habits will increase the length of life, but I doubt if the average will reach 100 years for more than a century."

He Undressed Himself With His Back Broken.

With his back broken in three places, one lung punctured, his shoulder crushed, and two ribs broken, Joe Spellman, of Helena, Mont., refused to allow physicians to undress him, saying, "Shucks, doctor, I can do it myself," and he did it. A short time after Spellman was dead.

Spellman was caught in a big rotary cylinder in the plant of a metal company where he was employed.

Automobile Loops the Loop.

Earl Stough, of Newberry Township, Pa., wasn't practicing any circus stunt when he drove a five-passenger touring car off the edge of the forebay of a barn to hitch a corn sheller to it, but the car wouldn't stop, and through the open doors it went.

Leaping twenty feet to the ground, it landed right side up and ran forty feet before Stough recovered his wits sufficiently to apply the brakes. The auto hadn't a scratch and Stough escaped with a sprained arm.

They Cannot Parade in Bathing Costume.

Still indignant from last season's bathers' display, particular citizens of Valley Park, Mo., have secured an injunction preventing bathers from the Merrimac beach from strolling through the streets of the village in their suits. Week-end bathers from St. Louis, who heretofore persisted in shocking the good people by walking down the "main street" clad only in their dripping suits, will this season be forced to stay near the water or suffer penalties for contempt of court.

98-year-old Constable Can't Give Up His Job.

John Roberts, of Alledonia, Ohio, is probably the oldest public official in the United States, he having been recently reëlected constable of that town against his wishes. He recently celebrated his ninety-eighth birthday anniversary. He was born in Belmont County, Ohio, in 1816. His wife, ten years his junior, and two of his eight children, aged respectively 45 and 65 years, are living. Roberts has been city constable for eight years.

Nuggets of Information.

Vera Cruz, Mexico, has the distinction of being the wettest place in the Western world. It has an average annual rainfall of 180 inches.

The famous Death Valley in California is the lowest point on the continent of North America, being 276 feet below the level of the sea.

The great bronze Statue of Freedom surmounting the Capitol dome in Washington is nineteen feet six inches high and weighs nearly 15,000 pounds.

The chance of two finger prints being alike is not one in 64,000,000,000.

Wasps rank next to the highest classes of ants in point of insect intelligence.

The pearl-button industry of this country is centered in Iowa along the Mississippi. The shells of the fresh-water clams are made up into buttons by electric power.

United States rural mail carriers cover more than 1,000,000 miles daily.

Light Summons a Policeman.

The police of Brockton, Mass., have installed an ingenious device equipped with an electric light by which a patrolman may be called to the box by the central office at night and information may be given quickly to him over the telephone. Beneath the main box is a small compartment opened by a push button containing a pair of handcuffs securely chained to the post.

Invent Lock for Automobiles.

A thief-proof lock for automobiles has been invented by three men of Concordia, Kan. The lock is placed on the steering column, under the steering wheel, and to all appearances is a part of the post. When the car comes to a standstill it is automatically locked by the new device. Though the engine may be started, the remainder of the mechanism refuses to respond as long as the lock is "set." The inventors are C. A. Smith, J. E. Gibbons, and J. G. Smith.

Learns English; Gets a Pardon.

As a result of his learning to speak English while in prison, Matto Marinovitch, an inmate of the State prison, at Salem, Ore., has been pardoned. Marinovitch was arrested two years ago charged with stealing a watch which he had in his possession. Being unable to speak English he made virtually no defense and was given a maximum sentence. He now speaks English and has convinced prison officials and the governor that he bought the watch in good faith of the real thief.

Hunts With Bow and Arrow.

Press Asher, an aged hunter and fisher, near Albany, Mo., has never been convinced that a gun was a superior weapon for bagging game. He is 70 years old and still sticks to the use of a bow and arrow, which he makes himself from oak and hard pine. He easily kills all the small game he wants.

Gets Perpetual-motion Idea from Soap Box.

For hundreds of years men have been trying to invent perpetual-motion machines, but without success. The *Blade* has recently told of experiments of several inventors along this line. A perpetual-motion machine is understood to mean a mechanism which will run by itself without outside aid until it is worn out. It has often been said that when some means is found whereby a man can lift himself by his boot straps, then the perpetual-motion problem will be solved.

After six years of study and two years of actual work in a shop on his model, J. P. Machezis, of Grand Rapids, Mich., announces that he has invented a machine that is a success. However, nothing has come of it, and the inventor will not explain the mechanism for fear some one will steal his idea. All that he will say now is that a large steel spring, so devised as to uncoil and coil alternately, is its power. The machine is 5 feet 4 inches high and 10 feet long.

Machezis, who is 32 years old, and who came to the United States from Lithuania in 1899, made his first model from a soap box. The present machine, which he has not shown yet, is composed principally of aluminum.

Scientists say that perpetual motion will be made simple whenever a nonconductor for magnetism is discovered. Insulators have been found for electricity, but not for a magnet.

"Shamrock IV." of Extreme Design

The *Shamrock IV.* is of composite build—that is, metal frames with a wooden skin. In this respect she differs from the three preceding *Shamrocks,* which were of aluminum, bronze, and steel, respectively. Mr. Nicholson explained his reasons for deciding upon the wood skin. He said that in the first place metal plates would be so thin that there would be great difficulty in getting the rivets to hold, as their heads have to be countersunk flush to give a perfectly smooth surface.

Then, Mr. Nicholson believes that the lines of the vessel will be more truly preserved with the wood skin than with metal plating, as the thin metal plates are apt to buckle between the frames. In support of his contention he referred to torpedo craft whose sides often present a wavy appearance, due to the buckling of the plates.

Then, again, there is more resistance in wood, which is a point to be considered in a racing yacht. When a metal-built vessel strains it means the loosening of some of her fastenings, but this is not necessarily the case when wood is used. It will be remembered by all who have followed the course of recent cup contests that in *Shamrock II.* the loosening of rivets was a constant source of trouble.

In the construction of the vessel methods very similar to those adopted in building small raters are brought into use. Molds are set up to insure the frames coming to the exact form. The wood skin will be of mahogany.

Another interesting operation is the making of the mast for the challenger. This is of wood and hollow and in itself is quite a big undertaking. Two masts will be made, one to be ready in case of a "carry away," and they will be the biggest hollow spars ever built.

Needless to say, *Shamrock IV.* is a boat of extreme design, and, no matter what the ultimate issue of the contests may be, she will be a credit to her designer. Under the American rule of measurement extreme draft is heavily penalized, but a centerboard is not measured, so by its use several feet of draft may be obtained without tax.

Picks Wrong Man; Won't Vote

George W. Thompson, of Atchison, Kan., has sworn off voting for presidents. Thompson has voted at every presidential election since 1848, and the only candidate who received his vote and won was Franklin Pierce. "Either my judgment is rotten, or I am a hoodoo," he said.

Freed to Harvest His Crops.

Governor Hodges, of Kansas, granted a parole for sixty days to W. F. Richards, a prisoner at the State penitentiary, so Richards might go to his home in Saline County and harvest his wheat crop.

Richards entered the prison last January under a sentence of one to five years for selling mortgage
He was heavily in debt, and, according to rep
governor, his family has been dependent upon
Friends recently informed the governor the w
Richards planted last fall promised to yield a
crop.

Steals Useless Things Only.

Doctors are puzzled over the peculiar case
Stebbins, of Cincinnati, Ohio, a former policem
unable to control his impulse to steal things fo
has no use. He confines his criminal activities
less thefts and has never been known to tak
which he could use or sell.

Since he was discharged from the police forc
ing flowers from a park, he has committed
petty thefts. He once stole an anvil and anot
large sand screener.

Has as Many Lives as a Cat.

John Loney, of Iowa City, Iowa, promises to
long-established record of the cat with nine liv
times he has been pulled out of a gas trench
man and three times, with the aid of a pulmot
been restored. On the last occasion his fellow
refused to get excited over his predicament.

"Oh, it's John, is it?" said one of the me
worry. He'll pull out all right. John lives on ga

Ghost in the Clouds.

The first "air ghost" has been encountered.
most skillful of the British army aviators we
monoplane on a cloudy day, accompanied by his
As the aëroplane entered the clouds, the pilot su
covered another monoplane, no more than fifty y
coming straight toward him out of the mist.
his machine to dive, and after a headlong desce
out once more, but his relief was only momenta

The other pilot must have performed exactly
maneuver, for no sooner was he speeding alon
a level than he saw the monoplane once agai
out of the mist, heading straight toward him.

Terror-struck, the pilot dived again, emerged
clouds, and forthwith landed. Not until then
planation strike him. He had fallen a victim to a
tion of the clouds familiar to every mountai
and had seen his shadow projected upon th
vapor.

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